

Wild

A photograph of two hikers, a man and a woman, standing on a rocky coastline. The man is on the right, wearing a dark t-shirt, white shorts, and a backpack. The woman is on the left, wearing a green t-shirt and dark shorts. They are both smiling. The background shows a rugged coastline with large rocks and waves crashing against the shore under a clear sky.

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\$6.50* Spring (October-December) 1992, no 46

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Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Established 1981

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(October–December) 1992
Issue 46
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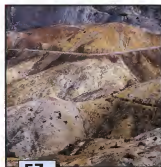
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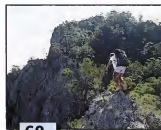
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Underground splendour



Cover Walkers pause amidst the
granite boulders of Cape
Woolamai, Victoria.
Janusz Molinski

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RESORTING TO DESTRUCTION

Ruining our high country by stealth

Perhaps the most effective thing we could do to conserve the Australian Alps is to introduce downhill-skiing friends to bushwalking. Any caring person would be shocked to see Australian ski resorts from the surrounding high country after the snow has gone. The view of Victoria's Mt Hotham from Mt Loch is a prime example of environmental vandalism on a massive scale. Carved into and built on top of one of the highest and most spectacular ridges in Australia is a depressing mish-mash of road scars, high-rise buildings, steel towers, ski lifts, vast car-parks, landslides and swathes cut through snow gums for ski runs—all visible for many kilometres. And the prospect doesn't improve at close quarters. Much of the area is carpeted in litter such as cigarette butts and other, less savoury, objects. In addition, streams below ski resort sewage discharge outlets have been found to be seriously polluted due to inadequate sewage treatment.

Environmentalists in both Victoria and New South Wales have questioned the management of our ski fields for some time. These concerns have been frequently reported in *Wild*. (See, for example, Jamie Pittock's article in *Wild* no 38.) Recent concerns have included the Ski Tube and its associated development in New South Wales, and the widening of Swindlers Valley in conjunction with the building of the new Heavenly Valley chair-lift (to replace a relatively unobtrusive old poma lift) at Mt Hotham.

Building ski resorts above the snow line in Australia has generally been an ecological disaster. To compound the damage by extending existing resorts and adding new ones, such as that at Dinner Plain near Mt Hotham, Victoria, is folly. The Dinner Plain development, in particular, has been singled out for criticism by conservationists. Widely touted as the perfect example of 'environmentally sensitive' alpine development, the resort's sewerage system quickly proved inadequate for the demands placed on it, with the result that mountain streams in the vicinity became polluted.

Recently, the Victorian National Parks Association was quoted in the press as calling for better provision of environmentally responsible skiing facilities by the ski industry and the abolition of Victoria's Alpine Resorts Commission. The VNPA describes the ARC's environmental performance as 'very poor' and points out that not one environmental effects statement has been prepared for an alpine resort since the ARC was formed in 1984. The VNPA considers that the ski industry is breaking up large projects into

smaller stages to avoid the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment and that Victorian Government environment authorities have been too soft on the ARC because it is also part of the government. The VNPA cites the felling of a kilometre long and 100 metres wide swathe of snow gums between Mt Buller and Little Buller for a new ski run as an example of undesirable recent development.

In place of the ARC, the VNPA suggests that there be stronger supervision by the existing Environment Protection Authority and the Department of Conservation & Environment.

The VNPA call followed the introduction of the Alpine Resorts (Amendment) Bill by the embattled Victorian Government in Parliament on 19 May without consultation or warning. The Bill was subsequently passed. The VNPA has pointed out that the Bill could allow the ARC effectively to assume control over sections of National Parks and over one proposed State Park. The VNPA claims that the Bill was promoted in the guise of allowing the ARC to manage cross-country ski trails outside resorts. However, the VNPA adds, in previous proposals the ARC wanted to take over parkland for car-parks, ski trails, ski lifts, accommodation, shops and toilets. The Bill comes at much the same time as news has been leaked of an ARC proposal to take over a substantial part of the Baw Baw Plateau.

(Other information we've recently received at *Wild* indicates that the ARC is charging trail-head fees for the road across Rocky Valley Dam wall—one of the main access routes for skiers visiting the Bogong High Plains—under an arrangement with Vicroads whereby the ARC controls the road in winter, when snow closes it to cars. To justify this action, the ARC argues that the road is not part of the surrounding National Park because it is a government-designated road.)

On 1 July the ARC and representatives of Victoria's mountain tourist industry (but not representatives of conservation groups or bushwalkers) announced 'Ski Plan Victoria'—to 'lay the foundations for the future management and development of the alpine tourism industry'. Exactly what this might involve is anyone's guess, but greater environmental responsibility is unlikely, especially if the following statement from a spokesperson for Ski Plan Victoria is any indication: '...activities in our ski fields have become increasingly burdened down with regulatory requirements that cut across the original intentions in the designation of specific areas for intensive alpine recreation and now jeopardise the future of this valuable industry as a whole'.



Chris putting his best foot forward on the Kepler Track, New Zealand.

I would have thought that everyone with a concern for our environment has a responsibility to ensure that the environmental requirements for would-be developers of our high country are extended and strengthened rather than compromised. At a time such as this it's good to know that there are conservation organizations like the VNPA, which are keenly interested in the Alps and alpine resorts. However, they can't do it on our goodwill alone. They need funds to fight campaigns such as that described above: send what you can to the VNPA, 10 Parliament Place, East Melbourne, Vic 3002 and thus help to save this priceless heritage of all

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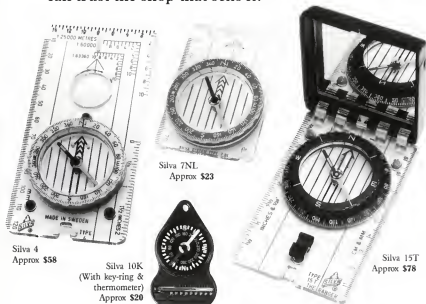


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EDITORIAL

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Due to recent growth in the size and sales of our magazines *Wild* and *Rock*, we need a school leaver to 'learn the ropes' from the ground up. The job involves a variety of administrative, clerical, advertising and computer work and you will be one of a small, committed team at our South Yarra (Melbourne) office. Full training will be provided. We envisage this full-time salaried position would suit a person aged between 17 and 20. Active involvement in one or more of the rucksack sports and a demonstrable keenness to learn and to work hard to a high standard are essential. Written applications only, to: Stephen Hamilton and Glenn van der Knijff, Wild Publications Pty Ltd, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

Leave your mark on the world

In the Editorials of issues 43 and 44 I wrote that we'd be giving a proportion of all our 1992 subscription and mail-order goods sales to World Vision's Saatusa tree-planting project in Ethiopia, and to Australian conservation organizations such as the Wilderness Society to help in their work to save our own remaining wild places. I wrote that we had donated \$5000 to each of these organizations. In *Wild* no 45 was a World Vision brochure for their Project Partners initiative. This project, which I personally endorsed, seeks readers to be 'Project Partners' with the people of Saatusa in development projects in reforestation, irrigation, flood-controlling dykes, and education and skills training. If you haven't already done so, I urge you to get that brochure out, read it and contribute to the great work World Vision has already done in Ethiopia. For our part, we are sending World Vision a further \$500 for the project as this issue goes on sale. Let's not miss our chance to do something really positive.

Make it a date

Sharp-eyed readers will have noted the introduction of a new *Wild* feature, Wild Diary, with issue 44. Many clubs and other organizations have already taken advantage of this new service in each issue to bring their forthcoming events to the attention of *Wild*'s 52 000-odd readers. Perhaps your organization is planning an event that is not listed. If so, note carefully *Wild*'s deadlines, as published on page 4 of this issue, and send information to Wild Diary at the address shown for your free listing in this calendar of significant forthcoming events in all the fields *Wild* covers. ■

Chris Baxter
Managing Editor

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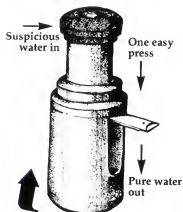
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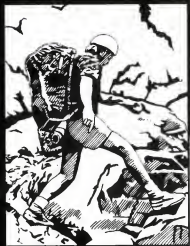


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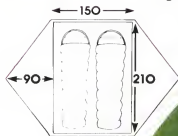
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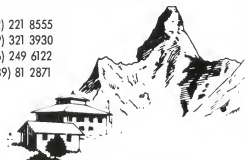
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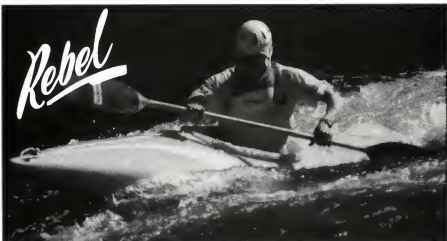


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THE YEARS ROLL BY

Bushwalkers mark important anniversaries

Celebrating the Blues

The Great Blue Mountains Heritage Walk will be in progress as this issue of *Wild* appears, and will continue until 8 November. A core group of 15 walkers set out on 17 September from Muswellbrook, at the northern end of the Blue Mountains, and hopes to cover a distance of approximately 370 kilometres to Mittagong, in the south, in 51 days. The 15 will be accompanied on various stages of the journey by other walkers, and will be joined for a variety of festivities in the Katoomba-Kanangra region during October. The walk marks a welter of anniversaries—60 years of the Blue Gum Forest (see the article beginning on page 57 of this issue) and the NSW Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs, and 25 years of the National Parks & Wildlife Service of NSW—and will raise money for research into the region's rare and endangered plants and animals. Walkers from many countries are expected to participate. For information about the latter stages of the walk and associated activities, phone (047) 87 8877.

A weekend of peak-bagging scheduled for April 1993 will honour the 50th anniversary of the Youth Hostels Association of New South Wales, an organization with a long and close involvement in the development of bushwalking. On 17–18 April, YHA members and supporters will climb 'the 50 most interesting peaks' in the State, thereby raising money for the voluntary search-and-rescue organization of the NSW Federation of Bushwalkers. The list of peaks ranges far and wide, from the '2000-ers' of Kosciuszko National Park to Mt Kaputar (1508 metres) and Crater Bluff (1094 metres) in the north-west and the Rock (554 metres), near Wagga Wagga, to name but a few. The standard of difficulty of the walks will vary accordingly, and all walkers and climbers are invited to become involved. Celebrity peak-baggers and supporters of the 50 Peaks Event include mountaineer Greg Mortimer and tiger walker Peter Treseder. For more information, contact YHA's Sydney office—phone (02) 267 3044.

Skilling historians of the world, unite

An association founded in New Hampshire, USA, during June 1991 aims to preserve and disseminate the history of skiing world-wide. Anyone with an interest in the history and heritage of skiing may join the International Ski History Association free of charge as a charter member; members will receive a quarterly journal. Australian skiing pioneer Mick Hull attended the first meeting of the association's board, at Whistler, Canada, during March. The programme was hectic: early morning meetings, seminars on skiing history, and spring skiing on the glaciers from half past ten until three. Sounds like a dirty



Members of Springwood Bushwalking Club who attended the club's first walk in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales, 25 years ago, celebrating the anniversary with a repeat of the dose. David Noble

Rolf Adams

Australian caver Rolf Adams drowned while diving in a cave in Florida, USA, during April. He and a partner were returning from a routine dive in Hole in the Wall cave when unknown problems struck. Adams's partner was unable to help him. Adams was an active caver in the USA and Mexico and an avid rockclimber with a particular interest in big walls. An article on big-wall climbing which he wrote with Anne Gray was published in *Rock* no 13.

Corrections and amplifications

It appears that the first descents of Coomera Crevice, Lamington National Park, Queensland, were made no later than 1984—not 1990, as indicated on page 17 of *Wild* no 44—and that Coomera Crevice and Coomera Falls may have been descended as early as 1979. The photograph on page 25 of *Wild* no 45, of a creek in the Coolangubra wilderness, was incorrectly credited to Rob Blakers. The photograph was from the South East Forest Alliance collection.

NEW SOUTH WALES

A spring chicken at 25

On Anzac Day, more than 60 members of Springwood Bushwalking Club celebrated their club's 25th anniversary with a day walk to Splendour Rock on Wild Dog Mountain, Blue Mountains National Park. Among the group were several people who had been on the club's very first walk 25 years before—to Splendour Rock on Anzac Day 1967.

Derschkos Hut

Derschkos Hut, near Mt Jagungal in Kosciuszko National Park, is to remain standing. (It was reported in Green Pages, *Wild* no 45, that the Snowy Mountains Authority had decided it no longer needed the hut and would demolish it.) We understand that the Kosciuszko Huts Association and the National Parks & Wildlife Service of New South Wales have taken over responsibility for the hut from the SMA and will maintain it as a refuge. The wood-burning stove and all other furniture have been removed and the hut is now kept unlocked.

Ups and downs

In May, tiger walker Peter Treseder completed an expanded version of his 1985 Blue Gum Yo-yo (see Information, *Wild* no 18), ascending and descending 12 passes in the region of the Blue Gum Forest, Blue Mountains National Park, and covering all the ground in between. The passes (in order) were: Gordon Smith



THE

PADDY PALLIN UPDATE

FROM THE LEADERS IN ADVENTURE

SEPT-NOV 1992

Welcome to Issue 1 of the Update, our way of letting you know the latest developments in products and activities available at your local Paddy Pallin store.

GORE-TEX VALUE - THE BARCOO. \$249

The Tanami Barcoo jacket is now available at all Paddy Pallin stores.

At \$249.00 it represents outstanding value for money for a fully featured Gore-Tex rainshell. The Barcoo passed with flying colours

the stringent tests carried out by W.L. Gore as part of their Guaranteed To Keep You Dry programme.

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THE PADDY PALLIN CLUB

Back in June we launched the Paddy Pallin Club in order to stay in touch with regular customers. For an annual subscription of \$10.00 members receive a host of benefits including a special Club members discount on their purchases, special rates on adventure activities as well as exclusive trips for Club members. Members receive a newsletter full of outdoor tips, product news, competitions, information on new offers etc.

To join simply pick up a brochure in your local Paddy Pallin store or telephone 008 805398 TOLL FREE.

THE TIKA CORONET - FOR TRAVELLING BUSHWALKERS.

You're off on some lengthy travels that could involve some bushwalking along the way? If so the Tika Coronet (\$389) could be the pack for you. It has both a top loading and front opening facility, a comfortable 2 size adjustable harness system that can be zipped away for avoiding the airport baggage chewer! The front pocket zips off and converts to a daypack. A fine pack for those travelling to Europe but stopping off in Nepal on the way home to trek around Annapurna.



'medical' contents, the kit also contains a fully laminated First Aid Booklet, Casually Record cards, a notebook and pencil and printed information on Hypothermia and Emergency contact numbers. **\$69.95**

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Chimney, Mt Banks Wall, Coal Mine Pass, Byles Pass, Butter Box Point, Lockleys Pylon, Crayfish Creek, Victoria Falls Pass, Pierces Pass, Perrys Lookdown, Evans Look-out and Govetts Leap. The horizontal distance covered was approximately 100 kilometres, the height gained and lost totalled about 7500 metres, and the trip took 18 hours and 18 minutes.

Wild Diary

1992

September	27	Walk for Wilderness	Aust	098 030 641
	30-November	Great Blue Mountains Heritage Walk stages 4-10	NSW	(047) 87 8877
October	3	Australian Canoe Polo League	Qld	(03) 459 4251
	3-5	Subaru Spring Classic M	NSW/ACT	(03) 663 8611
	4 and 6	Model events for World Rogaining Championships	Vic	(03) 369 2333
	6-9	Ski and Outdoor Trade Show	ACT	(03) 384 1702
	9-10	World Rogaining Championships	Vic	(03) 369 2333
	10	Western Australian Spring 12-hour R	WA	(09) 364 6467
	16, 17	Do You Know Tasmania? show B	SA	(08) 223 5544
	17	ICI Red Cross Echua Mini C	Vic	(03) 685 9837
		Minimal Impact Bushwalking Seminar	NSW	(02) 957 8337
	17-18	Hawkesbury Canoe Classic	NSW	(02) 580 8908
	19-25	Blue Mountains Footpaths Festival B	NSW	(047) 87 8877
	24	Burill Yamahon 88 km C	Vic	(03) 459 4251
		Goulburn Games 6-hour R	Vic	(03) 369 2333
November	7	ACT 12-hour R	ACT	(06) 248 7816
		Queensland 12-hour R	Qld	(07) 268 3338
		South Australian Spring 12-hour R	SA	(08) 269 7558
	7-8	Tasmanian Tiger Search 24-hour R	Tas	(003) 43 3367
	8	ICI Red Cross Yarra Maria C	Vic	(03) 685 9837
	14	VRA Summer 12-hour R	Vic	(03) 369 2333
	19-22	Southern Traverse M	NZ	(0064 3) 442 9575
	22	Outland Rock & River Classic M	NSW	(02) 746 8025
December	2-6	World Festival of Mountain Pictures	France	
	5	ICI Red Cross Barwon Mini C	Vic	(03) 685 9837
	12	Australian Canoe Polo League finals	NSW	(03) 459 4251
	27-31	ICI Red Cross Murray Marathon C	Vic	(03) 685 9837
1993				
January	15-17	Southern Crossing M	NZ	(0064 3) 442 9575
	30	Australian Canoe Polo League	SA	(03) 459 4251
February	12-13	Speights Coast to Coast M	NZ	(0064 3) 26 5493
March	14-15	Australian Canoe Polo League finals	Vic	(03) 459 4251
April	17-18	YHA 50 Peaks B	NSW	(02) 267 3044
		B bushwalking C canoeing M multi-sports R rogaining B skiing		

Treseder is investigating the possibility of adding further passes to the list.

Rock and roll

A new multi-sports event for those of an adventurous nature is the Outland Rock & River Classic, to be held for the first time on 22 November at Barrenjoey Head, north of Sydney. Activities will include abseiling, rockclimbing, single-rope prusiking, kayak slalom and orienteering. For details, contact Karen Fry on (02) 746 8025.

Trek with a difference

During November, six blind and vision-impaired people from New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory will travel to Nepal, where their activities will include a nine-day trek in the Annapurna region and three days of white-water rafting. While away, they will be without the guide dogs on which several of them usually depend, and in unfamiliar and challenging surroundings. Those readers who would like to support this venture may send donations to 'Guide Dogs Mobility Trek', c/- Guide Dog Association of New South Wales and ACT, PO Box 107, Milsons Point, NSW 2061. Donations over \$2.00 are tax-deductible.

VICTORIA

New coastal track

Victoria's south-west coast has a new walking track. The 'Mahogany Walking Track' winds for 22 kilometres along beaches and through heathlands and dunes between Warnambool and Port Fairy. It takes its name from the elusive 'mahogany ship', reputedly wrecked on that stretch of coast during the 18th century and since then the subject of much speculation and many searches. Press reports of recent months have suggested, not for the first time, that the remains of the mahogany ship may have been located among the dunes at last. The track is an initiative of the Alcoa aluminium company, which is a partner in a plant in nearby Portland.

TASMANIA

Vanishing cave

Cavers Stefan and Rolan Eberhard and Vera Wong recently visited Vanishing Falls to carry out a routine fauna study. Their mini-expedition discovered 2.5 kilometres of cave downstream from the falls but extending upstream, parallel to and beneath the dry stream bed. The cave is characterized by brilliant stream passages, deep pools and rock collapse, with water constantly pouring from the ceiling. The three cavers described their exploration as 'spooky'.

Other major achievements in Tasmanian caving of late include a connection from Thun Junction into Exit Cave. Dean Morgan, Trevor Wailes and Vera Wong completed the first through trip—one not likely to be repeated. The 250 metre passage is extremely

tight and unpleasant. Thun Junction is the only entrance to Exit Cave not to bear a signpost from the Department of Parks, Wildlife & Heritage denying access until the completion of a management plan for the cave. The plan is not expected to be finished until the end of 1992. (See Green Pages in this issue for more on Tasmania's caves.)

Stephen Burton

Challenging

The 1992 APTM Tasmanian Winter Challenge was held on 23 August over a course which began at Tarn Shelf, Mt Field National Park, and finished at New Norfolk. As in the previous two years, the event comprised legs of cross-country skiing, running, cycling and kayaking. No results are yet available as we write.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Extensions to the Homestead

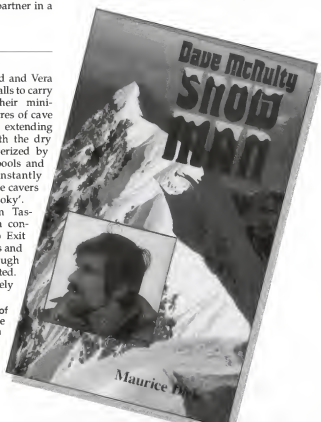
Australia has a new longest cave. Old Homestead Cave, beneath the Nullarbor Plain, now measures a length of 23 kilometres as a result of exploration during August 1991. It thus surpasses in length Jenolan Caves, New South Wales (now 21 kilometres), and Exit Cave, Tasmania, which has been relegated to third place with a length of 19.5 kilometres.

SB

OVERSEAS

Snow biography

A biography of New Zealand mountain guide and snow safety specialist Dave McNulty, who died in an avalanche while heli-ski guiding at Mt Cook in July 1989, was launched at the Hermitage, Mt Cook, on 30 May. Dave McNulty's *Snow Man* was written by Auckland journalist Maurice Dick, whom McNulty introduced to climbing. The project was sponsored by the New Zealand Mountain Guides Association, and profits will go into a



Proceeds from the new biography of New Zealand snow safety expert Dave McNulty will help young mountain guides to gain experience in Canada.



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trust fund to enable young guides to travel to Canada to gain experience in avalanche safety. Copies of the book are available from Alpine Guides Mt Cook Ltd, PO Box 20, Mt Cook National Park, New Zealand, for \$NZ23 including surface-air-lifted post.

Giardia

Wild reader Tony McKenny reports that huts in the Mt Aspiring region of New Zealand's South Island now carry signs alerting walkers



Australian cavers have been active in Thailand in recent years. This flowstone formation is in Tham Nam Lang cave. David Carmichael

and climbers to the presence of the intestinal parasite giardia in the rivers and streams of the Matukituki valleys. Visitors are advised not to drink the water. The spread of giardia is believed to be overwhelmingly caused by the careless disposal of human faecal waste. Bushwalkers and all who enjoy wild places, be warned! As McKenny says in his letter: 'Imagine all those beautiful waterfalls, rivers and lakes—and you can't drink the water.'

Up the creek

Australian cavers in Thailand completed some unfinished business with the exploration of Tham Sisa in 1991. In 1985 this cave was explored for 1160 metres, including 740 metres of streamway. The flow of water within the cave sometimes reached an impressive two cubic metres a second, and exploration ended at the first of two waterfalls. In 1991 a 12-person expedition climbed both falls. The first was climbed free, but the second succumbed only to a variety of imaginative techniques using bamboo scaling-poles and scaffolding. The cave now measures 2.5 kilometres in length.

SB

Everest anniversary

Tashi Tenzing, grandson of the late Sherpa Tenzing Norgay and now a resident of Australia, hopes to mark the 40th anniversary of his grandfather's historic first ascent of Mt

Everest (8872 metres) with Edmund Hillary by climbing the mountain himself. Tashi Tenzing, five other Australian climbers and one Nepalese will attempt the original South Col route during May 1993. Patron of the expedition is Lord Hunt, who was the leader of the party which put Hillary and Tenzing Norgay on top of the world's highest mountain on 29 May 1953. (Peter Hillary, son of Sir Edmund, reached the summit of Mt Everest during May 1990.)

Not the Cannes Film Festival

The seventh World Festival of Mountain Pictures will be held from 2-6 December 1992 at Antibes and Juan-les-Pins, on the French Riviera. Categories include film and video, slides and slide shows, black-and-white and colour photographs. The deadline for registration is 15 October, and more information can be obtained from AFMIM, 62 Avenue des Pins du Cap, 06600 Antibes, France—fax (33) 93 67 34 93.

Iron cavers

Since the opening of the Iron Curtain, caving in the former USSR has burgeoned as a result of numerous expeditions on which westerners have joined forces with local cavers. The potential for new cave discovery is enormous—one area boasts a potential depth of more than two kilometres.

Caving in the Commonwealth of Independent States is not for the faint-hearted. There are frequent internal border problems, living conditions are fairly austere, and caving techniques are primitive, relying on brute strength for shorter pitches and wire rope for longer ones. The most recently discovered long pitch is a 410 metre drop in K-3 cave, in the West Caucasus (see Information, Wild no 42, for comparisons).

There have also been significant discoveries made in the realm of cave diving.

SB ■

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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MARCO POLO	Compact travel, summer-spring hiking, cycle touring	Slant box wall, sec. pocket	350 gms	1.00 kg	2 season	\$239.00
COLUMBUS	Midweight hiking or travel, non-alpine 3 season use	Chevron box wall, sec. pocket	550 gms	1.30 kg	3-4 season	(Std) \$289.00 (Lg) \$299.00
NAVIGATOR	Hiking, travel, camping, 3 season or non-alpine use	Chevron box wall, sec. pocket	700 gms	1.50 kg	3-4 season	(Std) \$329.00 (Lg) \$349.00
NAVIGATOR PLUS	Hiking, travel, camping, all season & alpine use	Chevron box wall, sec. pocket	850 gms	1.70 kg	4 season, snow	(Std) \$359.00 (Lg) \$379.00
DOWN FILLED - MUMMY SERIES						
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MOONRAKER	4 season hiking	Chevron chest baffles, slant box wall, neck muff, Hipora foot, sec. pocket	700 gms	1.50 kg	4 season	(Std) \$339.00 (Lg) \$359.00
RUMDOODLE	Ski touring, snow, alpine hiking	Vertical chest baffles, slant box wall, neck muff, Hipora foot, sec. pocket	900 gms	1.80 kg	4 season, snow	(Std) \$389.00 (Lg) \$409.50
SNOW LEOPARD	High altitude, snow, mountaineering	V Tube baffles, vertical chest baffles, neck muff, Hipora foot, sec. pocket	1077 gms	2.25 kg	4 season, snow	(Std) \$429.50 (Lg) \$449.00

OUT OF THE WILDERNESS

Victoria and South Australia enact wilderness legislation

Long campaigns rewarded

On 9 June the Victorian Parliament passed the National Parks (Wilderness) Bill and paved the way for the proclamation of one wilderness park and 19 new wilderness zones within National Parks to be added to the State's two existing wilderness parks. The newly protected areas are those contained in the Land Conservation Council's final recommendations on wilderness and listed in Green Pages, *Wild* no 44. Conservation groups welcomed the passage of the Bill and praised the efforts of the State Government, especially of the Minister for Conservation & Environment, Barry Pullen, in bringing the legislation to fruition. They also gave credit to the State Opposition and its Shadow Environment Minister, Mark Birrell, who lent the Bill the necessary support. However, the Opposition blocked Government moves to strengthen the protection proposed in the LCC recommendations. Satisfied that the timber resources in the catchment of the Wongungarra River, south of Mt Hotham, could be adequately replaced, the Government proposed that it, too, be declared a wilderness—as the LCC had recommended it should in those circumstances. The Opposition rejected this, as well as plans to eliminate grazing from alpine wilderness areas and deer-hunting from the Avon wilderness. It supported the Government's two proposed additions to the land reserved in the Mallee, at Mt Cowra and Chinaman's Flat. Conservationists lament the Opposition amendments to the Bill and have vowed to continue to oppose them, but regard the new wilderness areas none the less as a fitting reward for a long and difficult campaign.

While Parliament was busy considering the legislation, there were some vigorous exchanges in newspaper correspondence columns, and its opponents were vocal and visible. The Recreational Public Land Users Group, representing shooters, four-wheel-drive and trail-bike enthusiasts, anglers, fossickers and horse-riders, organized a rally outside State Parliament on 23 May to oppose 'the extremist Green paralysis'. According to press reports, about one-tenth of the expected numbers turned up to complain of being locked out of public land; Minister for Conservation & Environment Pullen was said to be unmoved by the protest and commented in a news release: 'It's what these interest groups haven't said which makes for interesting discussion.'

The South Australian Parliament passed a Wilderness Protection Bill during May. Wilderness in the State, the vast majority of it in arid land, was formerly administered under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The new Act provides for a committee to recommend creation of 'wilderness protection areas' and 'wilderness protection zones' with different



Looking towards the Wongungarra valley from Mt Murray. The Victorian Government's proposal to declare the Wongungarra catchment a wilderness zone was blocked by the State Opposition. *Chris Baxter*

levels of protection, and contains several provisions welcomed by conservationists. Members of the public will be able to take legal action against perceived breaches of the Act, and to nominate areas for consideration by the committee. As a result of lobbying by the Wilderness Society, Aboriginal peoples have been guaranteed access to wilderness areas for traditional purposes and Aboriginal involvement in management has been strengthened. But the news is not all good. Existing mining will be allowed to continue in wilderness protection zones 'until resources are exhausted', whereupon the level of protection will be upgraded. Mining will be excluded from wilderness protection areas but reports suggest that 'necessary' four-wheel-drive access will be allowed. It was reported in the *Adelaide Advertiser* that parts of Flinders Chase National Park and Kelly Hill Conservation Park, on Kangaroo Island, are likely to be the first wilderness areas protected under the Bill. The legislation came after an intensive five-year campaign by the Wilderness Society and others, and received strong public support including hundreds of letters to the State Minister for Environment, Susan Lenehan.

Walk with soul

The Walk for Wilderness, a sponsored walk organized by the Wilderness Society and radio station JJJ, will take place on Sunday 27 September in locations around the country. See Action Box item 1.

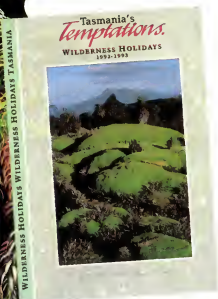
Award to Bob Burton

Bob Burton, long-time Wilderness Society campaigner in Tasmania and a Special Adviser to *Wild* since issue no 1, has been honoured with a Global 500 Award from the United Nations Environment Programme. The award recognizes outstanding achievements in the protection and improvement of the environment. Previous recipients include Margaret Robertson, another Wilderness Society campaigner, and Tasmanian Green Independent Bob Brown. Bob Burton has been involved with the Wilderness Society in many roles for nearly 20 years and is now the society's mining research officer. He has contributed items to *Wild* on many aspects of conservation.

Forest facts?

Recent reports by the Resource Assessment Commission and the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales refute claims made in an advertising campaign by the National Association of Forest Industries. The suggestion that native animals will return to logged areas is shown to be misleading: some will return, but logging removes many of the

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trees with large hollows which shelter animals such as the yellow-bellied glider and the sooty owl, and recurs too frequently in regrowth forests to allow new hollows to develop. The practice of 'fire hazard reduction burning' has been shown to decrease the diversity of the forest understorey and to favour introduced animal species over native ones.

To claim that logging has the same effect on forests as bushfires is wrong. The reports reveal that more old trees—the ones crucial for animal habitat—survive a wild fire than escape logging, and that soil disturbance and loss of nutrients is greater when a forest is logged.

Evidence from North America plainly contradicts the forest industry's claim that logging native forests reduces the greenhouse effect, a claim based on the theory that regrowth forests absorb more carbon dioxide than the original native forests. The RAC report finds that logging old-growth forests increases the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere, and that the establishment of plantations is a better way to combat the greenhouse effect than the logging of old-growth native forests.

A penny for the tortoise

Money raised from sales of a set of medallions depicting six threatened Australian animal species—the palm cockatoo, the koala, the western swamp tortoise, the Leadbeaters possum, the yellow-footed wallaby, and the southern right whale—will go to the World Wide Fund for Nature. The cupro-nickel medallions, designed and minted at the Royal Australian Mint, are a project of Westpac Banking Corporation to mark its 175th anniversary. See Action Box item 2.



Corporate image

The Wilderness Society has a new logo. Feeling the need for a symbol more widely representative of the Australian environment than the 'platypus in a triangle' that has been its trade mark since April 1991, the society briefed a design house, which came up with the logo pictured. The platypus and the triangle are still there, but so are various other native plants and animals. The society's National Retail Co-ordinator, Ann Eckersley, promised in the June/July issue of *Wilderness News* that the new design would soon be run up the flag-pole every morning, 'registered, patented [and] tattooed on to TWS workers' chests'. The society has also recently released its 1992 mail-order catalogue. See Action Box item 3.

New head for ACF

The Australian Conservation Foundation's hard-working and outspoken executive director Phillip Toynne is to stand down after five years in the job. He will be replaced by Tricia Caswell, hitherto an industrial advocate with the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

The David Suzuki Foundation

A foundation named after the prominent Canadian ecologist David Suzuki produces a 'Declaration of Interdependence' which reads, in part:

Humans have become so numerous and our tools so powerful that we have fouled the air, water and soil, driven fellow creatures to extinction,

Action Box

Readers can take action on the following matters covered in Green Pages in this issue.

1 For information about the Walk for Wilderness, telephone 008 030 641.

2 Threatened species medallions in support of the World Wide Fund for Nature are available from Westpac branches for \$9.95 or can be ordered by telephone (for an additional \$2.50 to cover postage and handling) on 008 131 331.

3 For a free copy of the Wilderness Society's 1992 mail-order catalogue, telephone 008 035 354.

4 The David Suzuki Foundation is at 2075 West 12th Ave, Vancouver, BC V6S 2G3, Canada.

5 For information about the proposed Natural Resources Management legislation in New South Wales, telephone Jeff Angel at the Total Environment Centre—(02) 241 2523.

6 For information about the Welcome Reef Dam proposal, write to the Welcome Reef Committee, 40 Alexandria Ave, Eastwood, NSW 2122.

7 For copies of *Minimal Impact in the Bush*, or to attend the minimal-impact bushwalking seminar in Sydney, contact Andrew Cox at the Wilderness Society, 1A James Lane, Sydney, NSW 2000—(02) 957 8337.

8 The Coalition Against Duck Shooting is at 37 O'Connell St, North Melbourne, Vic 3051. Telephone campaign director Laurie Levy on (03) 826 9715.

9 To contribute in any way to the campaign to clean up the Himalayas, contact either the Himalayan Environment Trust, 82 Sainik Farm, New Delhi 110 062, India; or the Nepal Mountaineering Association, Hattisar, Naxal, Kathmandu, Nepal.

dammed the great rivers, torn down ancient forests, poisoned the rain, and ripped holes in the sky...We are one brief generation in the long march of time; the future is not ours to erase. So where our knowledge is limited, we must remember all those who will walk after us, and err on the side of caution.

See Action Box item 4.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Kakadu World Heritage

During July the World Heritage Bureau of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature decided to place the whole of Kakadu National Park on its World Heritage List. This, conservationists said, was despite a lack of support from the Northern Territory's Minister for Conservation that amounted to open opposition. The Environment Centre of the Northern Territory accused the minister, Mike Reed, of squandering millions of dollars of government money in opposition to World Heritage listing for Kakadu, and described his support for mining as more to be expected from the Minister for Mines. As a signatory to the World Heritage convention, the Australian Government is required to protect World Heritage Areas from activities that threaten their natural properties.

Open and fair?

Territory conservationists see the treatment of a proposal to mine at McArthur River, near Borroloola on the Gulf of Carpentaria, as a bad start to the Federal Government's programme of 'fast-track approvals' for new development projects. The government gave assurances that public consultation would continue under the scheme and that the process of environmental assessment would not be weakened. The Environment Centre of the Northern Territory criticized the draft Environment Impact Statement for the project released during May—among other things, it proposes port developments in a sea-grass bed on the Gulf coast which is home to turtles, dugong and significant commercial populations of fish, and would allow the release of contaminated water into the river 'without understanding the potential impacts'—and is dissatisfied with the subsequent decision to allow the proprietors of the proposed mine to submit to the Territory Government a supplement to the report without releasing it for public comment.

Another one bites the dust

The Wilderness Society reported during June that the Mala wallaby of the Tanami Desert had been added to the growing list of Australian mammals regarded as extinct after the last colony was destroyed by fire in December 1991. According to the society, Australia's record of mammal extinction is the worst in the world.

QUEENSLAND

Hot air

Conservationists from Greenpeace protested against the contribution of coal-burning industry to global warming at the biannual Australian Coal Conference at Jupiters Casino

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during May. Among those addressing the conference, they said, were scientists brought from the USA to debunk the accepted wisdom regarding the greenhouse effect and global warming.

Sir Joh, friend to bushwalkers

Melbourne's *Herald-Sun* reported during June that Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, former Premier of Queensland, would attempt to pay off a \$5.2 million bank debt by turning his family property into a five-star time-share resort. Members would be able to enjoy activities such as cattle mustering, horse-riding, fishing and, yes, bushwalking. Where do we sign up?

NEW SOUTH WALES

State of flux

Conservationists are still unsure what sort of treatment the environment will receive at the hands of new Premier John Fahey and Minister for the Environment Chris Hartcher, who took up their present positions after the resignations of Nick Greiner and Tim Moore, respectively, during June (see Green Pages, Wild no 45). Proposed Natural Resources Management legislation which the new leaders inherited from their predecessors would, if passed, establish a council to decide on the management of forests, coastline and soil—a council which environmentalists claim would be dominated by National-Party-run government departments and by representatives of development interests. It would also: cut back existing National Parks in size; repeal the Endangered Fauna Act and otherwise threaten the future of endangered species; and enact resource security legislation with immediate effect over the forests of the south-east of the State and wider effect in the long term.

There are growing fears that New South Wales will plummet from its position as a leader in environmental protection to one at the other end of the scale. See Action Box item 5.

Shoalhaven dam plan

Several action groups have been formed to oppose plans to dam the Shoalhaven River at Callen Ford, flooding the upper Shoalhaven and Mongarlowe Rivers and creating an impoundment five times the volume of Sydney Harbour. Although construction of the Welcome Reef Dam is officially not due to begin until 2002, land purchases, major road-works, and research and study programmes in the affected areas suggest otherwise.

The reasons given for building the dam are to support Sydney's growth and to allow the algae-affected Hawkesbury River to be flushed out. There are many arguments against the dam besides the destruction of a wild and beautiful river. Rare plants and animals both in the catchment and downstream are threatened; possible developments may affect the Ettrema region and the Budawang; and there would be detrimental effects on the farming, fishing and tourism industries of Nowra and Braidwood. The economics of the project are regarded as doubtful, and associated problems may include uncontrolled urban sprawl, pop-

ulation growth, and poor water quality due to high phosphate concentrations in the catchment.

Opponents of the dam argue that Sydney continues to waste water because of weak water-pricing policies, poor waste-management practices, and lack of vision in the implementation of recycling; and that housing development continues at a great rate despite far-reaching difficulties. The action groups propose alternatives to the dam and argue that the time to act is now—before urban expansion and subsequent demand for water force this dam on a future government. See Action Box item 6.

Be aware

The Wilderness Society will conduct a seminar on minimal-impact bushwalking in Sydney on 17 October with a view to establishing MIB as standard practice among bushwalkers. Individuals and representatives of organizations that lead groups into the bush, in New South Wales in particular, are especially encouraged to attend. Material produced for the seminar includes a booklet entitled *Minimal Impact in the Bush*, which is available separately for \$5.00 including postage. See Action Box item 7.

Knee deep

The CSIRO and the Sydney Water Board have announced a joint research programme into the action of ocean currents off the coast of New South Wales. The announcement coincided with the release of preliminary results from a CSIRO study that show an increase in sediments on the seabed close to shore produced by Sydney's new deep-ocean sewage outfalls. The study found a large increase in concentration of a chemical used to trace sewage in the majority of 26 sites tested off Malabar and Bondi—between 800 metres and about eight kilometres offshore.

Foxes on the march

The success of the campaign to discourage the wearing of animal furs has a sting in its tail—for koalas. The price of fox fur has fallen dramatically, fox populations are thriving, and koalas are suffering. According to the Australian Koala Foundation, farmers in the west of New South Wales report more foxes than ever before; and research being conducted around Nowendoc suggests that foxes are killing koalas—and perhaps other species of native animals—in increasing numbers.

Making water

The Snowy Mountains Authority has plans afoot to generate precipitation by cloud-seeding. According to a report in the May issue of the ski industry publication *Alpine News*, experiments carried out during the winters of 1988 and 1989 showed that there was a possibility of capturing more water from the clouds between storm fronts. The SMA anticipates increased power generation, and increased revenue, as the snow melts. Skiers look forward to 'fresher snow, better depth and generally improved skiing conditions'. We wonder whether farmers in the dry Monaro rain shadow have been asked how they feel about the idea.

Parks guide

The New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service has an attractive new guide, in the form of a 16-page booklet, to public land within its control—National Parks, nature reserves, State recreation areas and historic sites. Copies are free at NPWS offices.



Minimal-impact it ain't—Blue Mountains, New South Wales. If you must build a fire, make it small; never use a ring of stones, and scatter the extinguished ashes before you leave. *Andrew Cox*

VICTORIA

Some of the alternatives

As Premier Joan Kirner's Labor Government stumbles towards an election in an unenviable condition, it may be worth considering what might happen to the State's natural environment in the event of a Coalition victory. Extracts from *Hansard*, press reports and Coalition news releases foreshadow the following: rewriting of the management plans for all National Parks 'to ensure that traditional users have access'; a review of the Alpine National Park management plans for the specific purpose of allowing four-wheel-drive tracks at present closed to be reopened to public vehicular use (regardless of the economics of doing so); the building of a dam on the Mitchell River—despite the recent closure of the vegetable processing plant at Bairnsdale, there is still very strong pressure for a dam to be built—again, regardless of the economics; and a review of 'all categories of Crown land' for the purpose of identifying suitable locations for tourism developments. The Shadow Minister for Tourism and Leader of the National Party, Pat McNamara, whose news release of 25 May proposed the last of these moves, was quick to assure the Victorian National Parks Association that the Coalition had no plans for National Parks 'other than as provided for in the National Parks Act', and said that the news release 'did not even mention National Parks'. In reporting this matter, the VNPA's July newsletter invites readers to draw their own conclusions on the subject.

Keep off the grass

During June an independent body of scientists, the Scientific Advisory Committee, made a number of recommendations under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act to the Minister for Conservation & Environment, Barry Pullen. One of these was that damage to

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soil and vegetation in the Victorian Alps by cattle grazing be listed under the guarantee as a 'potentially threatening process'. The recommendation identified grazing in alpine regions in the absence of controlled management as a danger to the survival of a range of flora and fauna. The Department of Conservation & Environment is now required to prepare a statement nominating appropriate management actions. As a further result of the recommendations, 18 plant and animal species will be listed for protection under the guarantee.

Mt Arapiles report

On 19 June the Wimmera Development Association released a report written by Paul Langley, entitled *Options for Increasing the Tourism Potential of the Mt Arapiles-Tooan State Park*. The park lies west of Horsham in western Victoria and contains Mt Arapiles, one of the most popular crags with Australian rockclimbers and one that also attracts climbers from overseas. There had been many submissions from the public following talk, by Langley and others, of building a recreation and accommodation centre opposite Centenary Park, where climbers and other visitors camp and where the area's few facilities are located. The report recommends that such a project should not be carried out but explores other ways of increasing the number of people who visit Mt Arapiles. Climbers and others are worried that the report uses the allegedly degraded state of the park to justify development congenial to tourism. Such development would surely lead to further degradation—if not of the park's facilities, then of its physical environment and vegetation. The report fails to consider at length simple measures such as the thoughtful management of car traffic and of large, commercially oriented groups. And it is questionable whether the report's suggestions, if implemented, would bring any more benefit to the local economy than the present management practices. These at least guarantee an influx of climbers every summer; the proposed camping fee of \$5 a night would almost certainly see rockclimbing in the park, with all its attendant economic benefits for the region, go into a sharp decline.

Charlie Creese

Snow cover

The Editorial on page 3 of this issue lists some of the concerns conservationists have with the management of Victoria's alpine resorts by the Alpine Resorts Commission, including the ARC's failure to produce, or to demand from developers, a single environmental effects statement since the commission's inception in 1984. The Victorian National Parks Association, in particular, has criticized the practice of developing resorts by small stages—or 'incremental development'—to avoid the close scrutiny larger projects would attract. For example, during June the Administrative Appeals Tribunal ruled in favour of a new chair-lift at Mt Hotham despite strong opposition from scientists, conservationists and skiers; the VNPA fears that new runs and a further ski tow in the same area will follow, adding up to 'a big environmental problem'. And, as mentioned in the Editorial, a new ski

run was carved last summer out of the ridge between Mt Buller and Little Buller. Readers need only refer to the photograph on this page and to those accompanying the article 'Australia's Alpine Resorts' in *Wild* no 38 to see the scale of such problems. Lest the VNPA's concerns be written off as 'green paranoia', ARC chief executive officer Philip Bentley commented on ABC radio news during June that the preparation of environmental effects statements 'has been unnecessary for the types of incremental development we have been doing'. On the same report Bentley said: 'We have not in any way harmed the flora and fauna.' Many people would beg to disagree, particularly after studying the photo on this page.

TASMANIA

No compensation

Nothing can compensate Tasmania for the loss of Exit Cave, yet the State and Federal Governments seem locked in dispute over the amount that should be paid to Benders, the company quarrying limestone from the cave, to halt its operations. Tasmanian Minister for Parks, Wildlife & Heritage, John Cleary, rejected an offer of \$400 000 from Federal Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment & Territories, Ros Kelly. This figure is based upon the loss of five jobs and the establishment of a viable alternative operation at Risbys Basin, near Maydena. There has not been any indication as yet that Benders will begin quarrying there. The workers and contract truck-drivers have already been dismissed from the Exit Cave site, and most have indicated that they do not wish to leave the Dover area.

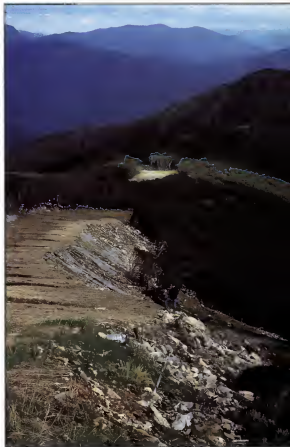
At present Cleary is talking of the extraordinary prospect of a 'rehabilitation blast' (a fine contradiction in terms) to repair damage from earlier blasting, but cavers and experts in his department have suggested that any further blasting would lead to increased silting in the cave. The department experts believe that blasting to round off the benches in the quarry is the best procedure. The Tasmanian Department of the Environment is the body likely to arbitrate on this contentious issue.

The compensation wrangle is based on a 'gentlemen's agreement' of 1988 between the Federal and State Environment Ministers of that time. The Commonwealth Attorney-General has determined that the agreement is not legally binding, but it seems that the Tasmanian Government is determined to get all it can from the Commonwealth with little concern for the environment. At the same time it is sending a supportive message to the mining lobby under the guise of a debate on employment and job creation.

The Department of Parks, Wildlife & Heritage has turned its back on three years of work on the World Heritage Area Management Plan. Minister John Cleary has interviewed representatives of various exploitative user groups and has sought Federal Government approval for the continuation of shooting and horse-riding, the maintenance of four-wheel-drive tracks, the establishment of tourist resorts and mines and the construction of roads in the World Heritage Area. Federal

Minister Kelly has agreed to all but one of these requests. The exception is mining, to which she objects, paradoxically, despite the presence of a semi-operational mine in the World Heritage Area. (Benders Quarry does not have any contracts at present and quarrying has stopped at least temporarily.)

The area near Maydena under consideration for quarrying is near Pillingers Creek cave in very pure limestone where the best cave



No need to study the impact? A 'small-scale' alpine development—the newly created Wombat ski run between Mt Buller and Little Buller, Victoria, with Mt McDonald behind. Jamie Pittcock

development is likely to be. Cavers only recently began exploration there, and have already discovered a 300 metre long stream cave heading towards an active spring 100 metres away in the 'resource use area'. The connection has been dye-traced and found to have a flow-through time of eight hours. Will this cave system disappear before it is explored and its scientific secrets are unfolded?

The trespasser arrested near Benders Quarry last summer (see Green Pages, *Wild* no 45) has heard unofficially that charges will be dropped.

Stephen Bunton

The Hydro in the 1990s

The Hydro-Electric Commission under chief executive officer Graeme Longbottom has released a statement of its environmental policy. An attractively produced 20-page booklet, it outlines the seven fundamentals of

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WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Friendly skies

The Coalition Against Duck Shooting took heart from the recent passage through both Houses of State Parliament of legislation banning duck shooting. Western Australia is the first State to take this step, but it is Victorian Labor Party policy to do the same. The use of lead shot will soon be phased out in Victoria, and the South Australian Government has already banned it. When announcing the new ban, Western Australian Premier Carmen Lawrence commented that the community could 'no longer accept the institutionalized killing of native water-birds for recreation'.

The Coalition Against Duck Shooting points to the irony that, in States which allow shooting, the so-called 'game species' are protected water-birds for most of the year and are removed from the list of protected species only for the duration of the shooting season. See Action Box item 8.

OVERSEAS

Wattle flour

The editors of a new book, *Australian Dry-zone Acacias for Human Food*, have identified wattle seeds as a valuable food source. According to Chris Harwood and Alan House, both CSIRO scientists, Aborigines in central Australia have used the seeds as a seasonal food for centuries. They appear to be nutritious—and palatable not only to Australian tastes but among people in Africa, where the *Acacia* genus is already grown on a large scale for firewood and as wind-breaks. Tests are continuing.

Warming up

CSIRO oceanographers have found evidence that the deep ocean has increased in temperature—an observation consistent with the predictions of greenhouse theory. They discovered that a section of the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand has increased in temperature by an average of 0.03° to 0.04° over the last 22 years. This change, though seemingly minute, would raise the level of the Tasman by two or three centimetres over that period—consistent with the observed rise in global sea levels this century.

Development and the environment

Continued criticism has forced the World Bank to make further changes to its policies on economic development in poorer countries according to a report in the *Age* during May. (Aspects of the bank's new forestry policy were reported in Green Pages, *Wild* no. 43.) The bank's 1992 development report acknowledges a frequent link between rapid economic growth and environmental damage, and identifies 'the poor' as both the main victims of the damage and among those

creating it. It says that there is a need 'not to produce less, but to produce differently', using less damaging methods, to help to alleviate poverty and protect the environment. Industrialized countries must assist by making appropriate technology available. 'Without adequate environmental protection', the report says, 'development will be undermined; without development, environmental protection will fail'.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the Commission on Mountain Protection, a subsidiary body of the International Union of Alpine Associations, concluded that a proposal for hydro-electricity generation in the Arun River valley in eastern Nepal, funded by the World Bank and the governments of several industrialized countries, poses a massive environmental threat. It fears that increased population along the 200 kilometre road that will be built to service the scheme will lead to serious deforestation. The power produced is to be sold to India. The commission said that it would urge the bank to abandon the project in favour of small-scale hydro-electricity schemes which would be of direct benefit to local people.

Himalayan action

There have been calls for Mt Everest and the world's 13 other peaks more than 8000 metres in height to be closed to climbers for a year each to allow rubbish to be removed and to give approaches to the mountains a much-needed respite from the pressure of expeditions passing through. The financial return Himalayan governments receive from expeditions makes this unlikely, but two organizations hope that other, less drastic measures will achieve some of the desired effect.

The Himalayan Environment Trust, established in 1989 by representatives of the world adventure community, including Chris Bonington, Maurice Herzog and Reinhold Messner, has produced a simple leaflet containing a code of conduct for visitors to the Himalayas. Many of the tenets of minimal-impact bushwalking apply, with additional considerations such as the need to respect local traditions and protect indigenous cultures: to observe privacy when taking photographs; to respect holy places and local etiquette; and to give to projects such as schools and health centres rather than to begging children.

The Nepal Mountaineering Association has also produced a leaflet for the advice of trekkers. Even more detailed than the code of conduct, it discusses cooking and accommodation and adds respect for wildlife and for inanimate objects to the list of the visitor's responsibilities. Both publications make interesting reading. The NMA has proposed a campaign to rid the Himalayas of all the litter accumulated over years of mountaineering and trekking, beginning with a two-year clean-up of the South-east Ridge of Mt Sagarmatha (Mt Everest), the original and most popular route to the world's highest point. See Action Box item 9. ■

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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PREPARATION FOR THE MOUNTAINS

How to enjoy your mountaineering—and live to tell the tale, by *Geoff Wayatt*

The mountaineer is a human animal who leaves the safety of civilization behind and returns to an environment where physical fitness is vital to survival—and to performing at your best. On heading into the mountains, most climbers subject their bodies to greater physical stresses than normal while subsisting on an inferior diet, and consequently perform at less than the optimum level. If it is to be enjoyed to the full, a climbing expedition should be the culmination of a well-defined and intensive programme of preparation. Spontaneous activity is most enjoyable, and most likely to be successful, when one is fundamentally fit. And those who lack natural athletic prowess will be pleased to find that fitness training improves agility, strength and endurance.

The best ways to learn how to climb are to go out climbing with an experienced friend or to attend a course run by professionals. Learning from books is more difficult though books can be useful as a resource in what the American climber Jeff Lowe calls 'long-range imaging'—part of the process of preparing yourself mentally for your climb.

A climbing course should teach skills and promote an awareness of climbing's objective and subjective risks—and of the importance for each person of keeping these in a realistic balance. Once learned, fundamental skills should be practised regularly. If real climbing situations are unavailable, use substitutes—the more realistic the better.

Learning to climb should open mental and physical horizons. Courses, in particular, should give budding climbers a realistic view of their immediate capabilities and of how these match their aspirations. After a period of intensive learning such as a course, it is wise to re-establish just what one is capable of, to reduce performance objectives somewhat and to rebuild to a position of confidence and competence.

In alpine climbing the focus should be on the experience of climbing and the mechanics of the process rather than on reaching summits (as in crag-climbing). Summits will come, or not, as the circumstances of each climb dictate. The most spectacular mountain locations often have the greatest potential for risk, and this can be lessened only by experience and by increasing skill. There is no disgrace in retreating without reaching a summit.

Many climbers go to the hills unfit, burdened by too much equipment, and without adequate food for the energy output that will be required of them. Let's consider food first. Dietitians recommend a normal daily intake of the order of 13 000 kilojoules,

yet the energy expended in a long day's climbing is likely to be three or four times that. Adequate food intake is as important as fitness, clothing or climbing gear. Food and fitness work together: hamstring cramps, for example, can be minimized by eating well, cured by rest and prevented by exercise.

What we eat determines our energy level. Climbing could consume as many as 40 000 or

even 50 000 kilojoules on some days. To maintain this sort of output, worthy of a triathlete, requires attention to food intake both before and during a trip. Additional considerations are that every gram of food eaten in the mountains has to be carried there, cooked, eaten, then either digested and converted to fuel, or excreted.

Food for good health and food for athletic performance are synonymous. A mountain diet should be a sustaining balance of fats, complex carbohydrates, protein, vitamins and minerals. Be aware that extremes of diet tuning can deplete reserves and induce early



Bruce Dowrick

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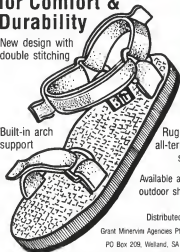
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'hitting of the wall'. A pathologist has observed that most dead climbers had little in their stomachs when examined.

The appropriate preparatory exercises for climbing are largely determined by the style of climbing anticipated. Different styles or techniques include the following: balance climbing, which uses the feet and hands on slab formations where positioning of the feet is critical to completing a move sequence without breaking the friction between shoe and rock; pressure climbing, which uses muscles, and limbs, in opposition to give purchase and gain height; and power climbing, which involves surmounting very steep, or even overhanging, sections of rock with an explosive, strenuous physical effort.

Fitness for climbing is best achieved by climbing. With a city life-style, however, and also for the sake of variety, there are many other exercises that develop climbing muscles, strengthen joint regions and encourage flexibility.

Climbing is mainly a push-pull action: the arms and back pull and the legs push. The arm movement in the pulling phase involves the elbow in a drawing and inward-rotation movement. The main muscle concerned is the large, wing-like latissimus dorsi in the upper back, assisted by the biceps.

The upper body is held in position by isometric contraction of the muscles of the abdomen and lower back.

Leg movement places the foot in a variety of rotated positions. The gluteal muscles draw the legs to trunk level and leg extension is mainly the responsibility of the quadriceps.

A climber's fitness programme combines three facets.

Flexibility is most important and is the key to injury prevention. Morning stretches increase blood flow and raise the body temperature. At the end of a hard day, stretching helps to prevent tightening in the hamstrings and back muscles.

Stretching counteracts muscle tightness and aches in joints from heavy exercise. It relieves imbalances and helps to prevent injuries to muscle sheaths, tendons and ligaments. Mountain guides of Zermatt, Switzerland, have been observed walking directly up steep hills, placing their feet flat on the steep terrain. Years of deliberately conserving energy have given them well-stretched Achilles tendons and calf muscles.

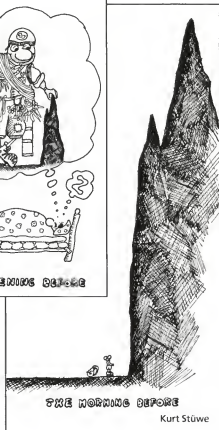
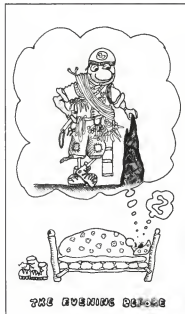
Cardiovascular or aerobic training improves the body's oxygen-carrying capacity. Your work-out should consist of 25-30 minutes of continuous exercise at a steady rate. Structure your cardiovascular training to your bodily characteristics. Aim to exercise at a level that raises your heart rate to around 70-75 per cent of its maximal rate.

Running is an effective exercise—especially 'fartlek', or 'run as you feel', cross-country

running over as great a distance as you can cover in a set time between 30 and 60 minutes. If you find running hard on your mind or on your joints, try cycling, swimming or skipping.

Don't underestimate the effectiveness of hill-walking as training for mountaineering—especially if you do it at a brisk pace and carry a pack.

Exercisers such as roller-skis, in-line roller-skates, Nordictac and Versa-Climber are effective—and expensive.



Kurt Stüwe

Strength and power can be built up with two or three training sessions a week. Muscle groups should be worked through their full range of motion in three sets of eight to ten repetitions. As the sets get easier, the resistance is increased rather than the repetitions.

Effective weight-training can be accomplished without special equipment in controlled routines using only body weight. Rope-climbing and the use of a peg-board are excellent upper-body exercises. The 'big four' exercises—pull-ups, push-ups, dips and sit-ups—cover almost all the major muscle groups. Additional exercises include two-bench triceps, bar hangs, half squats and the use of a Bachar ladder.

It is usual to train using weight three times a week, on alternate days. If you are over 40, slow muscle recovery may limit frequency still further.

Some training techniques are highly specific to the actions of climbing: ice-tool shafts can be simulated using towels or ropes over a

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chin-up bar; bounding and squat-jumps produce the 'fast-twitch' power required for dynamic bouldering; and balance improves rapidly with the use of a horizontal, slack rope.

Strengthening knees damaged by running down mountains and during skiing falls is a vital part of injury prevention and rehabilitation. Exercises include cycling, leg curls, leg extensions, half squats, leg presses, and adductor squeezes. Some games, such as basketball, irritate sensitive knees less than, for example, squash. (Medical advice and physiotherapy should be sought for serious injuries.)

Note that injuries to the shoulders can be aggravated by bench presses. Tendinitis is not uncommon among those who train using specialized Bachar ladders, hang-boards and the like. Take care when lowering off ropes and ladders; the elbow should not be strained when held at a right angle.

Pre-trip preparation has mental as well as physical aspects though the two are closely related. Clothing, equipment and food can be selected and laid out well in advance to allow time for re-evaluation of requirements.

People likely to be able to offer advice on logistics, training and so on include friends, park rangers, outdoor-shop staff and mountain guides. Trip information can be collected from guidebooks, magazines, journals and maps. Closer to the time, and during the trip, weather maps and radio meteorological forecasts are vital.

'Leading edge' climbing should be a matter of choice rather than of accident. To be sure, spontaneous epics provide some of the best moments in climbing, but they are an adventurer's step into the unknown. A novice, lacking a seasoned climber's broad experience and the ability to distinguish difficulty from danger, may find the same experience gut-wrenching and negative. A fine line separates adrenalin-induced exhilaration from anxiety and fear.

Route grading provides a way of rating climbs from easiest to hardest in both technical difficulty and seriousness. It's a much debated topic among more competitive climbers, and a very useful guide for the less experienced. Guidebooks and grades should help novices to select climbs sufficient for their aspirations yet within their ability, and to complete them in safety.

Grading systems vary, but the following one, created for the 'ponds section' of the Sierra Club, is a nice example:

- 1 Very easy: a hot spring or spa
 - 2 Easy: a sun-warmed pond or tarn
 - 3 Moderate: a mountain lake
 - 4 Difficult: a mountain lake fed by snow run-off or glacier melt
 - 5 Very difficult: a mountain lake with pieces of floating ice
 - 6 Extreme: a frozen lake; mechanical aid required for access to water
- Draw your own parallels! ■

Geoff Wyatt (see interview, Wild no 21) grew up in Tasmania. He began mountaineering in New Zealand's Southern Alps during the mid-1960s and has since become one of that country's most experienced mountaineering and skiing guides. In 1973 he established the Mountain Recreation climbing school, based in Wanaka. His feats include the first ski descent of Mt Cook, New Zealand, and the first ascent of the East Face of Huascarán (6760 metres), Peru.

WILD BUSHWALKING



INNES HIGH ROCKY

A walk to a contender for the title of Tasmania's most inaccessible peak, by Grant Kench

Innes High Rocky is not really that high at only 1079 metres, but it is solitary, remote and rugged. To the south lie the dissected ridges and the ragged quartzite of the Spires Range. To the west, the scrub-filled valley of the Denison River and the long Prince of Wales Range with the prominent, needle-like Diamond Peak dominating the skyline. To the north, the high, dolerite plateaux of the King William Range. And to the east, the button-grass-filled valleys of the Gell and Pokana Rivers, Perambulator Ridge and Badger Flat. Still further east, the Denison Range.

It was in 1988, from Bonds Craig in the Denison Range, that some friends and I had pondered the best route through scrub and over button grass to the Spires Range and beyond. Now it was January 1991 and we were pulling on walking boots in anticipation of meeting the challenge posed those years before. Having gazed from afar at Innes High Rocky, my goal for this trip was to reach the summit.

Innes High Rocky is one of the truly remote Tasmanian mountains, one that is not climbed nearly as often as the more famous wilderness peaks of South-west Tasmania. It was probably climbed for the first time by Edward D B Innes, a track-cutter and surveyor who between November 1907 and April 1908 undertook a railway survey between the King William Range and the Prince of Wales Range.

But Innes was not the first to venture into this region. Caves were occupied there by hunter-gatherers between 10 000 and 25 000 years ago. Hand stencils have recently been found in Ballawinne Cave on the Maxwell River to the west of the Prince of Wales Range. There is evidence of Aboriginal occupation also to the west of the Spires Range, along the banks of the Denison



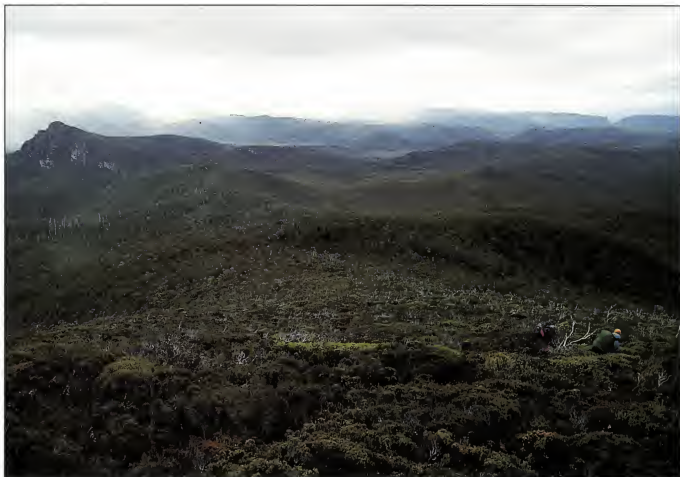
Looking towards the objective—Innes High Rocky beckons on the skyline from the Spires Range. **Opposite**, in the Spires. All photos Grant Kench

River, and to the east of the Denison Range in caves such as Nunamira. It is quite probable that the use of fire by Aboriginal people helped to create the vast button-grass plains that we were to traverse.

European occupation began late last century when tracks were cut with a view to establishing the easiest and shortest route from Hobart to the west coast mines. Between January and June 1896 Thomas Frodsham crossed the Florentine River to Gordon Bend on the Gordon River and continued north along the Vale of Rasselas, west of the river. Before reaching the Gell River he crossed to the north of the Denison Range, moving west to the Denison River near the northern

end of the rugged and seldom traversed Prince of Wales Range.

The track up the Vale of Rasselas pioneered by Frodsham and others gradually became the accepted route to parts further west. Whilst that track may still be followed in part, our route west of the Denison Range was in trackless country. Ken Collins's book *South-west Tasmania—A Natural History and Visitor's Guide* shows our proposed route crossing large areas of sedgeland and scrub. We were to find that 'sedgeland' consists principally of button grass, within which grow (at different elevations and in different areas) leptospermum, mela-leuca, banksia, bauera, epacris and white waratah. To round off the selection of short, prickly vegetation we encountered scoparia occasionally at higher elevations—not often, fortunately. In the



Dropping off the Denison Range from Bonds Craig amid classic Tasmanian highland scenery. **Right**, crossing the Gordon River.

thicker scrub patches, eucalypts tend to dominate banksia, melaleuca and leptospermum.

We left the cars at about ten o'clock, aiming to lunch at Gordon Vale, and scrub-bashed downhill to our first button-grass plain and the first of many discussions as to the most feasible course. We finally found the one dead tree amongst countless others that marked a taped route to a shallow crossing of the Gordon River. Having crossed in knee-deep water, we then joined the track up the Vale of Rasselas and reached Gordon Vale by noon.

During his 17-year stay at Gordon Vale, Ernie Bond constructed, in amongst the eucalypts, a large homestead, a bake-house, a butchery, an office and a honeymoon shack. For a time Ernie carried bread and surplus preserved fruit over the Thumbs to Adamsfield, where he had previously worked in the osmiridium fields. Sad to say, little remains; none of those buildings is now standing. Perhaps the rhododendrons and daffodils will survive and continue to remind us of Ernie Bond.

We left Gordon Vale at about half past one after a leisurely lunch and continued on the pad towards the Denison Range and Lake Rhona, our choice for the first night. The pad was dry despite light

drizzle. We reached Lake Rhona in time for an early dinner and a swim. It is one of the few remaining lakes in South-west Tasmania ringed by a quartz-sand beach. Glacial in origin, the lake is dominated at its north-western end by Reeds Peak; and even though the vegetation on its northern side has been destroyed by fire, it must still be one of the most picturesque lakes in the region.

Our sights were set on reaching Lake Curly on day two and we left Lake Rhona at about eight anticipating a long day of ample scrub, too much button grass and just enough pain. We traversed the Denison Range as far as Bonds Craig and dropped off to the west into thick scrub. The weather turned miserable and lunch was a stand-up affair at one of the many creeks that flow through the button-grass valleys and into the Gell River. The walking was rather tedious and I began to hate button grass—until we entered the next band of scrub! Having crossed Badger Flat we entered the scrub-filled, U-shaped valley that leads up to Lake Curly, and arrived at the lake at about five o'clock. A veritable gale was blowing straight up the lake towards the none too sheltered campsite.

Lake Curly has a quartz beach like Lake Rhona's, but substantially coarser. The lake is dominated to the south-east by Mt Curly's broad quartzite slabs and slopes covered by eucalypt forest. Lake Curly was discovered in 1908 by Robert Marriott Jnr, who named it Lake Amelia.

Like Innes, Marriott was attempting to link the Great Western Railway survey track, which passed through the Vale of Rasselas, to Websters Track, along the north bank of the Gordon River to near the present site of the Gordon Dam. Marriott left the Vale of Rasselas south of the Gell River and traversed south-west across Badger Flat past Lake Curly and Mt Curly. He then passed to the east of the Spires Range, crossed a saddle to the Denison River valley, and met the Gordon after traversing the Hamilton Range.

In the same year a government geologist, William Hope Twelvetees, was exploring in the same area. He followed the route staked out by Marriott and named Lake Curly and Mt Curly in recognition of the curly nature of the peak's quartz schist. His names were accepted by the Nomenclature Board in 1953 in preference to those of Marriott.

The third day dawned with less wind, and a fine mist over Lake Curly. The lake looked magnificent and we departed late for the Font, in the Spires Range, where we intended to establish our base camp.

I understand that Perambulator Ridge was named by my friend Fred Lakin for its easy, open going: 'It's so open and smooth one could wheel a pram over it.' There is no doubt that the ridge traverse offers more comfortable walking than the valleys with their button grass, but I'm not so sure about the pram. The high point of the ridge offers fantastic 360°

wilderness views—of Lake Curly and Mt Curly, Conical and Shining Mountains, the Spires Range, Innes High Rocky, the King William Range, the Denison Range and, far to the south-east, the Frankland Range. The day was sunny and warm and after lunch on a quartz outcrop we began the trudge up a scrub-covered spur leading to the Spires Range and the Font.

The Font is a small hanging lake, carved by a glacier from quartz-rich conglomerate. It is overlooked by Flame Peak, a big outcrop of contorted quartz with a large orange streak. The Font was occupied that day not only by members of our party cooling down after the day's walk, but also by huge tadpoles.

Daybreak came with not a cloud in the sky—an opportunity to tackle Innes High Rocky in fine weather. By breakfast-time we had already donned sun-hats. Later we climbed on to the summit ridge of the Spires Range as Twelvetees had before us.

Once again we were scrambling on, round and over clumps of the ubiquitous button grass—oh, for a made track!—occasionally interspersed with rocky outcrops or with scoparia, the bane of bushwalkers in Tasmania. My poor, lacerated legs!

We reached the summit of Innes High Rocky for lunch and gazed again at 360° wilderness views. It was clear why Innes had chosen to climb this peak from which to view the Prince of Wales Range. A small cairn remains on the summit, perhaps the remnant of that constructed

by Innes. Of the mountains all around, Diamond Peak in the Prince of Wales Range stood out. I felt slightly weary as we speculated about the best route through scrub and over button grass. Had I not been party to such a discussion once before?

On the morning of the fifth day we were greeted by fog—the harbinger of another fantastic day, a day to be devoted to exploration of the southern portion of the Spires Range. We climbed Flame Peak, then embarked on a protracted and inconclusive discussion of the route. The

eastern side looked impossible. Of course, once on the western side, it looked no better, and eventually we opted for a high course along the tops.

That night a strong wind sprang up and by morning it was raining. The weather of the previous two days could not last. We bade the Font farewell and returned to Lake Curly for a late lunch, arriving cold, wet and hungry. The miserable weather only enhanced the beauty of that spot, however.

We had planned a circuit walk over Mt Curly and Conical and Shining Moun-



Innes High Rocky area



tains for day seven, but it was raining when we arose and after further, indecisive debate we opted to retreat to Lake Rhona instead. Of course the bad weather cleared as soon as we began and did not set in again until we had reached Lake Rhona. The rain continued, however, and on day eight we retraced our steps along the Vale of Rasselas and through Gordon Vale to our cars—and, ultimately, to hot chips at Westerway. We had met the challenge we'd set ourselves those years before; now we had a new one.

Not long after our return, a party of five experienced bushwalkers was rescued by helicopter from the South-west Tasmanian wilderness near the Spires. They survived, not through luck but because they were experienced and properly equipped. The walk described here should not be attempted by inexperienced walkers, nor by those poorly equipped. We cannot rely upon rescue services when walking in the wilderness. We must respect the harsh nature of the country—for that harsh nature is the main reason it remains wilderness. ■

Grant Kench's love of bushwalking has to stand in line behind the responsibilities of family life and of his career as a solicitor. Nevertheless, occasional weekends away allow him to recharge the internal battery, press the shutter button, and reflect on the need to preserve wilderness.

A CROSS NEW GUINEA

A seldom repeated journey through the wild heart of
Australia's nearest neighbour, with *Geoff Lawford*



'Do yourselves a favour', he said. 'There are resorts around here. Take a two-week holiday, have a good time, then go home. Nobody need know. If you've told people back home that you're going on this journey, tell them the jungle was too thick, the terrain too steep. Or tell them the police wouldn't let you go—which they wouldn't.'

Mr Burgoyne was Personnel Officer for Ok Tedi Mining. Because he'd been to the Western Province of Papua New Guinea and knew the terrain, we had gone to him for advice. For three hours he cast doubts on our sanity.

Rod Gray and I returned to the two strips of foam rubber that constituted the furniture of our room at the Port Moresby Salvation Army Hostel and contemplated what to do.

'Do you think we should do it?', I asked.

'I used to think you were tough', he replied.

We decided to ignore Burgoyne's advice.

We flew to Wewak on the north coast of New Guinea, dipped our hands in the Bismarck Sea, getting our shoes wet in the process, then turned and headed for the south coast, 600 kilometres away. Between us and our destination were jungles, mountains, rivers and, if Burgoyne was to be believed, lots of scrub typhus, worms, scabies, mites, head-lice, skin fungus, cerebral malaria, crocodiles, snakes, stinging trees, and death.

We were not the first to risk going there. In 1927–28 Charles Karius and Ivan Champion, Papuan patrol officers, crossed New Guinea 'at its widest point and through its most difficult terrain'. After two attempts they emerged at the mouth of the Sepik River, 11 months after leaving the mouth of the Fly River with 36 carriers, six police, a cook, and more than 600 kilograms of supplies and 600 rounds of ammunition.

During the Second World War five miners and two administrative officers, led by Jack Thurston, a gold prospector, escaped the Japanese by crossing the island from north to south. They took five months.

In 1959 two Dutchmen, C B Bar and G H Dasselael, crossed the island just west of the Indonesia-Papua New Guinea border with the aid of air drops and radio communication. In the same month as they reached Hollandia (now Jayapura) on the north coast, French photographer Pierre-Dominique Gaisseau, two cameramen and a sound-technician headed north on a similar route. Just less than five months later,

only Gaisseau and the sound-technician emerged on the north coast; the others had flown out. Gaisseau made a film of the journey, entitled *The Sky Above, the Mud Below*.

In the mid-1960s three Englishmen, Derek Skingle, Maxwell Smart and Malcolm Kirk, crossed from the Fly to the Sepik in four months. They used up to 25

only to bring our sanity further into question. Somewhere in the warps of our personalities you might have found a good reason to cross New Guinea, but it eluded me. 'Because it's fun', Rod once suggested. 'Don't be ridiculous!', I told him.

On 7 July Rod and I hitched out of Wewak on a ute together with 17 other



Looking back to the north over the Sepik Plain from the village of Sokamin. **Opposite**, the Ilam valley from the Hindenburg Range. Rod Gray makes way for passing traffic. All photos Geoff Lawford

carriers, had air support, and flew the first and last stages.

We instigated three initiatives: we didn't carry firearms; we carried only muesli, rice, porridge and lentils for food; and of these we carried only enough for ten days. We anticipated that the journey would take two months.

In addition to food, we each carried an air-bed on which to float down or across rivers, thermal underwear, a raincoat, a sleeping sheet, a cotton blanket, and a compass. Between us, we had some rope and three groundsheet. Secreted in plastic bags inside our packs we had 600 Kina (\$A800) each in small denominations. If it should cost more than that to get to the south coast, we simply wouldn't get there. Our packs weighed 22 kilograms each.

To cross New Guinea, one needs a reason as well as equipment. Burgoyne wanted to know our reason. 'Because it's there?', I'd wondered, but this seemed

people, all locals. We drove up the Prince Alexander Mountains and along the northern edge of the Sepik Plain, through jungle and grassland. Roadside signs were illegible, obscured by vines. After dark we arrived at Maprik and the next day we hitched on a truck across the Sepik flood-plain to Pagwi. This was as far south as roads went.

We planned to continue by boat, westwards up the Sepik River and then southwards up one of its tributaries. A series of rides in a variety of craft took us by stages to the pretty village of Ambunti, to Inioik, then up the May River past the foothills of the central New Guinea cordillera to Maipari. At Maipari it was impossible to find fuel or anything motorized so, replacing our thongs with walking shoes, we hired a dug-out canoe and four men to paddle it. In one day they paddled us 30 kilometres up river. The river became increasingly turbulent and the terrain on either side increasingly steep. In a few places waterfalls fell directly into the river. By nightfall we were tackling grade 2 rapids—but ascending them instead of going down. We tackled the last rapid in the dark with

the aid of moonlight and an old, yellow-beamed torch with flat batteries.

For the next two weeks we walked. We rose at six o'clock, ate a huge breakfast, set off at seven, and walked as fast as we could. Because we were worried that Burgoyne might be right and that we would never see civilization again, we didn't stop for lunch or snacks. We walked until seven in the evening.

We followed paths that sometimes were quite wide—veritable highways through the jungle—and at other times completely disappeared. We weren't carrying machetes so we often had to duck, weave and crawl. In the lowlands the jungle was open but, as we climbed to a height of 2600 metres, it became extremely thick and matted with grass, ferns and vines. At the highest altitudes we entered 'moss forest', where trees are draped with beards of moss and the ground is half a metre thick with it. There was very little wildlife. Occasionally we heard a cassowary stomp the ground, but we never saw one. The jungle was sparsely populated and, apart from the path, there was no sign of human beings.

After three days the terrain became so steep that we ascended on hands and

knees and descended backwards, hanging on to roots and trees with our hands. We often climbed the side of a spur only to find that the path dropped steeply down the other side, losing any height we'd gained. At such times, when the terrain was at its most dissected, even though we hurried and followed a path, we progressed only one kilometre an hour.

Once a day we came to a village. Often we spent the night there. There'd be three or four huts on stilts with woven cane walls and leaf roofs which sometimes kept the rain out and always kept the rats and cockroaches in. Wandering beneath the huts would be pigs, dogs and chickens which took fright when they saw our pale skin, as did the babies of the villagers, who cried at us. The women



wore grass skirts and the men shorts or penis gourds.

At each village we bought food to supplement that which we carried. Mostly we bought sweet potato and taro because that was all there was. Taro looks and tastes like purple sweet potato; both taste very starchy. In one village Rod bought 40 lemons. I thought him stupid. At the end of the next day's walk, I saw the same lemons dribble out the top of his pack.

'What did you bring them for?', I said.

'There was space in the pack, so I filled it up', he replied.

'With 40 lemons!'

'Not 40', he said. 'Twenty. The other 20 I put in the top of *your* pack.'

To be able to follow the path southwards, to know which fork to take at

junctions, to know where to wade and where to emerge from rivers, and even to differentiate between path and jungle, it was necessary for us to hire guides.

All our guides were men, some as old as 50 and others as young as ten. They were short, thin and wiry, and wore T-shirts and shorts that often looked less like clothes than like holes joined together with a thread. They never wore shoes: they didn't need to wear them; they couldn't purchase them; and no shoes would have been wide enough in any case. Bare feet were more serviceable. They didn't cause blisters or break down or rot; they were better than our shoes for climbing trees, skipping along

slimy logs over horrendous chasms, and performing all sorts of acrobatics. Even our unfit guides, the slowest we had, moved faster down hills than we did because their balance was better than ours and because their bare feet afforded them better grip.

Our guides rarely talked when walking. Sometimes they looked back to make sure that we were coping, and then continued. When we fell, they said 'Ooo';

Rod Gray and guides wading the May River on the first day of walking. The route taken by the two Australians leads beyond the mountain in the distance.



and to indicate that water was okay to drink, they nodded. They held and sang the last syllable the few times they did speak. To sleep, they lay across each other if it was cold and sat cross-legged with their heads hanging down if it was warm. When we paid them, they tried to look into our wallets and if they saw that we had lots of money they asked for more. Many of the younger guides spoke English so we had little trouble communicating.



Gray and three guides before descending the Hindenburg Wall. A kilometre high in places, the wall was a major obstacle to early explorers approaching the highlands from the south.

Whenever our guides saw an animal, they stopped, caught it, cooked it and ate it; when the animal was a snake, they screamed and leaped a metre in the air—then caught it, cooked it and ate it. Once they caught a possum and in the evening threw it on the fire. The fur was singed off and they alternately ate and cooked it from the outside inwards: paws first, then limbs, breast, and so on down to intestines and brain. As the night proceeded the bones got bigger, the crunching louder, and their fingers and faces progressively more bloody.

'How far to go?', we often asked.

'Ooo...long way', they would reply.

When we encouraged them to be specific they'd say, 'Half a day'; then, when we said, 'Isn't it further than that?', they'd nod and say: 'Yes. I think maybe it is two weeks.'

Guides came with us for one day, taking us to the next village, through the terrain with which they were familiar,

then returned home. A few times we didn't take guides; once we sacked them for being too slow; and once they deserted us.

Our route took us over the Thurnwald Range, through Telefomin, across the headwaters of the Sepik, over the Victor Emanuel Range at a place which avoided the worst of the karst country, through the Ok Tedi mine site, and along a new road to Ningerum. At Telefomin and Ok Tedi we bought western food. Telefomin was in a grassy, populated valley. The jungle-clad peaks on either side were jagged and spectacular, rising to over 3000 metres. Everywhere else the vegetation was dense and the population sparse. The karst country wasn't populated at all and was full of mud, sink-holes and creeks with holes in them. One creek we followed flowed two ways: half its water flowed into one hole and the remainder into another. Some holes were big enough to swallow a person.

No sooner did we cross the ridge of the Victor Emanuel Range than it began to rain. For 30 kilometres we walked in ankle-deep mud, hemmed in on either side by jungle that was thick, cold and wet.

At Ningerum, having crossed the central cordillera, we bought a dug-out canoe eight metres long, half a metre wide, and in places paper-thin and riddled with borer holes. It sat well up front but listed to port at the stern. It was so heavy that it pushed rocks out of the way.

Rod hadn't paddled a canoe before so he sat in the bow. I stood at the stern with one foot on the gunnel and the other on the hull, imitating the Papuan paddlers I'd seen, until I saw a rapid and promptly

lay down lengthways along the hull. After the first day the rapids ceased and our progress slowed. The Alice River became sinuous and wide and we had to paddle to get anywhere. There were few villages and the river was lined with unbroken, virgin jungle. We saw many birds, including storks and white cockatoos. After three days we came to D'Albertis Junction, the junction of the Alice and Fly Rivers, where we camped on the bank and waited for a boat. Both rivers were 100 metres wide. Our bank was sandy, the far banks jungled. We knew boats came up the Fly River because we'd heard it from villagers on the Alice.

D'Albertis Junction could have done with a video shop. We watched the rivers mysteriously rise when there hadn't been any rain and fall when there had; otherwise there was not much to do except peer into the sky for aeroplanes that didn't come and anticipate with dread the arrival of another mosquito-ridden night. After three days of talking about blood transfusions, eating the last of our food, and having our fishing-line broken by what we fancied were crocodiles, a boat came. We paddled out to meet it mid-junction and the people on board merely waved.

That night another boat came. Again we paddled out to meet it and again we were politely ignored. The third time it happened it was raining and we got wet.

We finally caught a boat two days later but only after going 50 kilometres up river to meet it. It was a tugboat called *Ok Menga*, new, blue and white, and rimmed with rubber tyres, pulling two barges behind. Above every door was a sign: 'Certified Store'; 'Certified Washroom'; 'Certified Engine Room'. Certified for what, we wondered? Four of the crew were Papuan and the other six were Filipino. The *Ok Menga* was contracted to bring ironmongery to Kiunga, from where it would be transported to the Ok Tedi mine.

There are few villages on the Fly. The river became wider, and the jungle taller and less dense. Finally grassland replaced the jungle and stretched far to the horizon.

The Fly river-mouth was a delta over 70 kilometres wide. We navigated the islands and mangroves in between and headed east across the Gulf of Papua. Three days later we reached Port Moresby; we had been away for six weeks. That evening we arrived at Canberra airport still wearing our grotty shorts and thongs. The temperature was minus two. 'Good weather for sunbathing', someone joked. I didn't care; I didn't feel the cold. I was too happy remembering the past six weeks to fuss about the ones to come. ■

Geoff Lawford is a surveyor with the Australian Surveying and Land Information Group (AUSLIG) in Canberra. He has travelled widely through Europe, Asia and Africa, and has represented Australia at the World Orienteering Championships three times.



TWO DAYS LOST

It happened to *Gordon Lehmann* in the northern Flinders Ranges of South Australia



My neighbour and I had been looking forward to a week's walking around the Mawson Plateau. It was the second week of July and the weather looked promising—just right for an adventure.

The Mawson Plateau lies about 50 kilometres north-east of Arkaroola Village, a tourist complex and private sanctuary in the far northern Flinders Ranges. Arkaroola was once a pastoral station but much of it has been retained

eastern horizon we could see the northernmost end of Lake Frome, the barrier to the Strzelecki Desert. For sheer majesty, it is matched by only a few places in Australia. We sat and gazed in awe.

We set up camp a short distance from the top by the beginnings of a small creek. There was an eerie silence, with no birds, goats or kangaroos to be heard, as though they had all gone quiet at the sight of intruders. The next morning we checked

at one end and rapids at the other. We camped for the second night by such a hole and once we had put up the tent we climbed out of the creek to a high point to check our position. After a confusion of compass bearings and false landmarks we discovered that we were, indeed, up the wrong creek.

The continuous drizzle that kept me awake for much of the night was still coming down in the morning. We ate breakfast and waited for a break in the weather, then packed up.

We backtracked until we came to a spot on the creek that we recognized, and headed off in the direction of a place marked on the map as 'Tee Junction'. The property's owners have named it thus as a safety rallying point and have cached survival rations there though we didn't know it at the time. We began to see evidence of what must have been devastating floods that dumped huge, smooth, rounded boulders in the middle of the creek. The path cut by the water into the rocky sides took on the appearance of a well-constructed mountain road. This is certainly no place to be during bad weather, and the evidence of it left us constantly watching the weather and feeling quite vulnerable.

The path of the creek had developed into a valley in places and a gorge in others, making it difficult to form a picture of our surroundings. We could but speculate about the country we were meandering through; the only landmarks were those we could see in the creek. It would be the end of the day before we could climb out for a look.

We walked and climbed past extremely picturesque water-holes, many deep enough to swim in. By lunch-time we found a spot where we could have made camp under the huge gum trees surrounding the water, but we had only come a few kilometres along the creek and so we decided to continue until three o'clock.

On rounding a sharp bend in the creek we came upon a high, wide, sandy bank that looked just perfect. I unpacked the wet tent and set it up to dry in the little bit of sun that was still touching the bottom of the gorge. Rather than sit on a rock watching the tent dry, I decided to walk over to the escarpment only a couple of kilometres away to the east. The view out over the vast plain that we had seen on the first day would be great and according to the map it would be an easy two kilometre walk from the ridge above the creek. My neighbour decided that he would explore the creek and some of its side streams and as he owned the only map, I took a bearing from it and gave it back. It looked pretty simple: bear south-east to a hill 651 metres high—that was it. I grabbed my pack and threw my camera and film in it, checked my water bottle and put that in, too, along with my jacket; then, to balance the load, I threw in my food bag. My sleeping bag was still



A defiant goat keeps an eye on the intruders by a waterfall on the first day. **Right**, the campsite on the second day, in typical country only three kilometres from the edge of the plateau—but up the wrong creek. **Previous page**, afternoon light high on the plateau. All photos Gordon Lehmann

as wilderness, ruggedly beautiful and only disturbed by feral goats, rabbits and the occasional fox. Access to the plateau is difficult and only a few people take the trouble to explore it. There are no roads and the only ways in are by helicopter or on foot. We settled for the cheaper option, half a day's climb from the hot springs at Paralana. Paralana is approximately 34 kilometres north-east of Arkaroola—a drive of about three hours. There we left the car (complete with anti-theft steering-wheel lock—a city habit) and headed up the creek towards the southern end of an escarpment.

The climb up the winding creek took most of the afternoon and was slow and difficult in places. Now and then it would open into small rock pools or turn abruptly into sheer, rocky bottle-necks that we just had to climb. Having spent the previous day in the car, we were totally engrossed in the sweaty, aching climb and didn't bother to look around. When we finally did turn towards the view, we were astounded by the endless expanse of the ranges to the south and the huge plain that lay out to the east. On the

our position on the map and headed off towards a waterfall only a few kilometres away.

There are no tracks or even track markers to follow on the plateau so compasses and good maps are essential. Meandering creeks are the main thoroughfares. With little warning, we found ourselves above the waterfall which was to be our lunch stop. It is characteristic of the plateau that many of its features are hidden until they are within a few metres. Lunch was interrupted by feral goats and we moved on, only to find evidence of other intruders. We began to notice footprints in the wet sand and after a couple of hours we came upon a campsite with seven tents, almost enough for a town in this remote part of Australia. We didn't see any people, though, which was eerie, and when we passed the same way the next day the tents were gone.

Navigation had been difficult and we were not sure whether we were at the creek junction we had been looking for or at a different one. We were still coming to terms with the scale of things and had to readjust our idea of what constitutes a creek. In places the creeks are easily recognizable to any Adelaide resident, but they can rapidly turn into large rock-holes up to 15 metres wide and 40 to 50 metres long, with small waterfalls



down at the bottom and my medical kit was still in the top pocket. My off-hand decision to take all those things would prove to be the best one I made that day; choosing to go over the escarpment without the map was undoubtedly the worst.

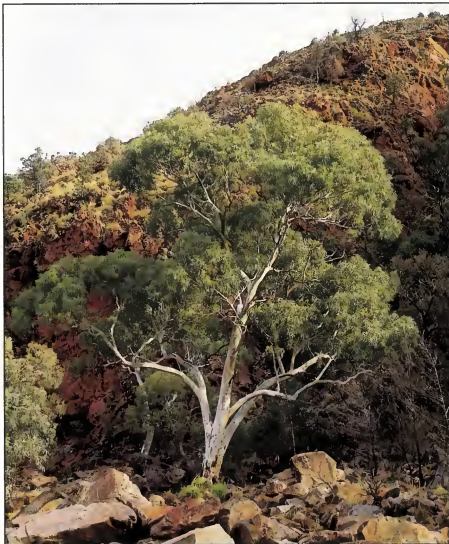
I moved fairly quickly over terrain that looked almost alpine, with wet, mossy ground and wind-swept, stumpy trees all bent over in the same direction. There were a few rocky outcrops and the beginnings of several small creeks. Eventually I wound my way to the edge. The magnificent view to Lake Frome and the seemingly endless ranges to the south was just as impressive as on the first day, but I couldn't see the escarpment. I had reached a spot round the corner from it and would need to negotiate a tricky rock face. I decided to play it safe, go back, and return the following day with my neighbour.

It was about 4.30 and I knew that I should start back before it got dark. I took a back bearing from hill 651 and set off, over the same rocky outcrops I had crossed on my way out and round the beginnings of the same creeks, but faster now than before. After about 45 minutes I stopped to check my bearing. To my horror, hill 651 had gone. After a moment's confusion I decided to backtrack until I found the hill again. I must be very close to the creek, I thought, so I didn't worry too much when I was unable to find the hill again. I returned to my north-west bearing and moved on, this time more slowly, searching for a sign of the creek. I called out to my neighbour in the hope that he was within shouting distance.

Before long it was too dark for me to see where I was walking, and I had to give in and look for a place to spend the night. As I settled into a spot in the shelter of some rocks next to a small creek, I felt confident that I was very close to the main creek. I collected some firewood in the dim light and soon had a warm fire going. Thankful that I had my sleeping bag, I tried to rest, but my mind raced over the last few hours, looking for my mistake. I found paper and a pencil and began to write down my thoughts and formulate a plan for the morning. I could picture myself walking into camp just after first light and making a cup of fresh coffee to wake my neighbour up.

I guessed that I had gone too far north, and that if I went south for a short while in the morning, then west, I would come across the main creek and be able to follow it to camp. From memory, the creek ran roughly north-south for almost the entire length of the plateau—but I wished for that map so I could be sure.

A full moon rose and lit the ground almost like daylight, making sleep even harder. I decided to walk a few hundred metres to the top of a hill. The valleys and hills looked much larger than I had expected and they were beginning to be



Instead of leading Gordon Lehmann back to camp, this dry creek bed became wider and drier. **Right**, the view that led Lehmann astray; looking south along the edge of the Flinders Ranges from the 651 metre hill, with the huge plain on the left.

filled in with a mist that was slowly rolling like a tide. I sat for ages, spell-bound.

I woke covered with dew, sleeping bag and all. My body ached from the awkward position in which I had slept, and the smell of goats only added to my misery. From my high point I searched in vain for a familiar landmark or some sign of the main creek. I couldn't believe how different everything looked from the previous evening and I now began to feel alone.

I went over my options again. It seemed that all I could do was head south for a while, then west, and hope to cross the creek. I forgot all about my bearing hill (651) from yesterday. After about an hour I turned west. I could see a creek in roughly the right direction that looked big enough to be the one I was looking for—or to lead into it. I started down the gully but, before I realized it, the sides were almost vertical and I was on a one-way trip down.

By lunch-time it was obvious I would not find my way back to camp this way.

The creek we had camped on was smaller than this and I had the sudden thought that it might feed into this larger one. I could be going further and further from where I wanted to be! I decided to backtrack and re-evaluate my position.

While working my way back up the creek I went over my options a dozen times or more. I could be too far south. Perhaps I should try going north for a while and then west. I really didn't have much idea where I was, but I did remember the way I'd come that day. I kept going past where I had been earlier in the day and continued northwards.

I reckoned that by now my neighbour must be thinking I had gone over the edge of the escarpment. With luck, he might have heard me calling out and know that I was merely lost. I was fairly certain that he wouldn't have raised the alarm yet, and that he would still be looking for me. It would take him until some time tomorrow to get out. I could not expect a search party for days yet. It was up to me to find my own way back.

When it got near the time to turn west, a creek appeared from round a hill. As I got closer it began to look a lot like the one I was looking for. I could scarcely believe it; I had found my way back and would be in camp before long. Gradually,

however, it became obvious that this creek was another look-alike and would not lead me to the campsite at all. So much for 'plan B'. I began to look for a place to spend my second night out on my own.

I could see a likely spot for a campsite just a bit further down the creek on the opposite bank. The creek narrowed at some rocks and was surrounded by thick bushes. It was like many other crossings, a balancing act between the bushes while stepping from rock to rock, but as I pushed a branch aside I lost my balance and the tension of the branch flung me backwards into the rapids. Shock and disbelief soon turned to anger when I realized that I hadn't put my sleeping bag in its stuff sack; it would be soaked.

I lit a fire and emptied my pack, sleeping bag first. I made a rickety clothes-line and put my sleeping bag on it first, as close to the fire as I dared. I used a biscuit tin to cook in and ate with my pocket-knife. My handkerchief became a coffee filter (my neighbour had my pot and his Drambuie so I didn't feel too bad about having the coffee).

I was kept busy for a long time, trying to dry everything by draping it over the sleeping bag—I was inside it by now—and turning all the time to face the fire. I was almost asleep when I heard rain; there had been thunder and lightning in the distance. I jumped up, shoved things into my pack and grabbed a garbage bag from the pocket where I kept it for just such emergencies. It was surprisingly roomy inside and only my

head and shoulders protruded. These I covered with my jacket, and settled in for a reasonable sleep. Needless to say, I got soaked again, this time from condensation.

It hadn't rained much during the night and the sky was clear; it looked like another great day. 'Plan C' was to go east

the word 'Arkaroola', but it didn't spell anything like that. Perhaps it said 'Private Property' or 'No Trespassing'. I was not prepared for the words I did read when I got close enough: 'Paralana Geothermal Hot Springs'. I had to read it over and over before I could believe it. I had come to the northern entrance of the



until I came to the plain, then head south to Arkaroola. I was sure that I was still north of Arkaroola, and the road to Paralana follows the ranges along the edge of the plain. I would be bound to meet the road somewhere and it would be easier for a search party to spot me on the plain. My neighbour would be on his way out by now, or so I guessed. It was time to stop wandering around in the ranges.

I had been going for a gruelling hour or so when I came across a four-wheel-drive track, the closest thing to civilization I had seen for days. There were even fresh tyre marks in the damp earth. I kept to the track as it wound its way down to a valley about six or seven kilometres long, which I have since learned is called Hidden Valley. It's ironic; I could find Hidden Valley, but not my neighbour or our tent.

I slogged on. The valley opened out on to the plain and I came to a gate and a fence line. It looked like one that we had passed when driving in to Paralana, but I remembered how often I had seen a familiar sight over the last few days only to find that I was mistaken. I turned south along the fence line.

I had been walking for more than seven hours, my feet were sore, and I needed a rest so I scanned the distance looking for a likely water-hole or creek. In the distance I could see a wide, green belt that stretched from the edge of the ranges out into the plain. I hoped that this indicated a creek and that I could look forward to making camp, putting my feet up and having something to eat. As I got nearer I could make out what looked like a gate, then a sign on the gate. I couldn't quite read it and I was trying to make out

springs, an entrance I hadn't even known existed. I forgot my sore feet and walked on with new energy. There was my car. I could see some people further along the creek so I went to talk to them and blurted out my story. I must have sounded pretty stressed because they gave me a supply of beer. Beer was surely invented for times like this.

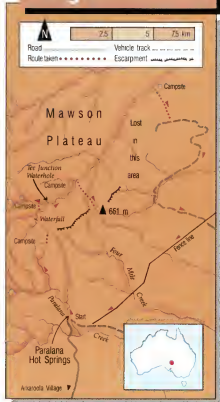
As we talked a light plane flew over and began to circle lower and lower. We waved, and the people I was with, who worked at Arkaroola, told me that it was Doug Sprigg in his old Auster. It turned out that my neighbour was also in the plane. He had reached Arkaroola about an hour earlier and had raised the alarm.

State Emergency Service volunteers were already on their way from Leigh Creek and Doug Sprigg had been up in his Auster almost as soon as the alarm was raised. I was embarrassed by all the trouble I had caused, but the speed with which the rescue had been organized was reassuring.

I was very lucky. The rugged country of the far northern Flinders Ranges had been at its best, and I learned a good lesson without too much pain. Marked tracks and rangers in popular walking areas had made it easy to become complacent. I now carry my own maps even if others have them. I have bought a good signal mirror that can be seen from 30 kilometres away, and I will never again complain about the extra weight of safety gear. My neighbour isn't too keen to go bushwalking with me any more but one day, we both agree, we will return. ■

Gordon Lehmann lives in Adelaide. He is a keen bushwalker and gets away several times a year to Victoria, Tasmania or somewhere within South Australia. He is an advocate of wilderness protection but also argues for wide access to remote areas.

Northern Flinders Ranges





THE HIMALAYAS *BY SKI*

An epic traverse from Kashmir to Manali, by *Jamie Serle*



‘Enjoy your stay in Kashmir’, we had been told, ‘and avoid the old city. There is cross-fire.’

An Indian Army post in a Srinagar winter: dejected sentinels in freezing wind, heads down, collars up, AK-47s bulging under rain-capes, and sullen faces eyeing us off. We were the sole tourists arriving in Srinagar. The only other westerner looked every inch a journalist though he denied it and hurried away.

The troubles in Kashmir, referred to locally as ‘the tension’, were keeping tourists away. Instead there were soldiers everywhere; trucks and Jeeps gave an impression of business though much of the city was closed. The houseboats were

empty. Night-time gun battles provided a strange and disturbing backdrop to the still lakes and bare trees.

Shrouded in a permanent mist, Srinagar was tense, cold and muddy, yet still beautiful from the water.

The four of us—Huw Kingston, Carol Ankers, Megan Bowden and I—didn’t want to spend long in Srinagar. Our plan was to ski from Lihinwan across the Margan Pass and into the Warvan valley, heading north and east over the main chain of the Himalayas and into Zaskar. There we would travel to Padum before coming south again into Lahaul and ultimately to Manali in Himachal Pradesh. With a journey of some 450 kilometres ahead of us, and five passes to

cross, we were anxious to be on our way, but an injury to Huw’s back, and ‘the tension’, delayed us for a week.

We had expected the crossing of the Margan Pass (3700 metres) to be straightforward. Instead, a steep, slick gully disappeared into swirling mist above; I wished we were coming down it. The morning’s promise of an easy crossing had slipped away in a blinding snowstorm as we had gained height. Searching for clues to our route, we groped our way across the flat-topped pass, unable to tell up from down and with no idea how fast we were travelling. The pass dropped away gently into an intricate maze of gullies and ridges, half

seen, half suspected as snow fell ever more heavily.

After hours of blundering around, the sight of trees enticed us into a gully we hoped was the right route. It wasn't. Subtly it narrowed down and eventually became a steep gorge. The prospect of climbing out again was horrifying; even downhill progress was more a matter of exhausted floundering than of skiing. This place embodied all our worst avalanche nightmares, yet, somehow, there we were.



When in Rome... Jamie Serle relaxing in the local way after a month on skis. *Huw Kingston.* **Above right**, on the Kang La, the highest point of the traverse at 5468 metres. *Carol Ankers.* **Far right**, out of the gorges at last—camp at Humpet on the approach to the Lonlital Gali pass. *Kingston.* **Previous pages**, nearing Rangdum Gompa with Kun (7087 metres) in shadow behind. *Jamie Serle*

With nowhere safe to stop, we continued, speaking less and less as the skiing became more difficult, crossing buried avalanche debris that hid countless potholes. Every time one of us fell, it required a huge physical effort to extricate skis, body and pack from the deep mush.

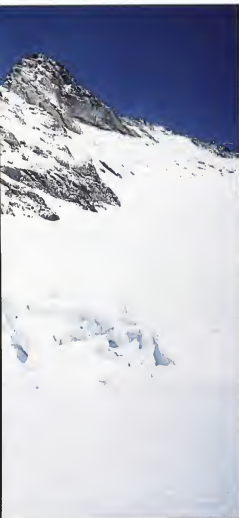
Tired, wet without and dehydrated within, we finally reached a place that seemed relatively safe. The snow sliding into our gully was on the increase. Protected by a buttress on one side and trees on the other, we dug platforms and disappeared into our tents, trying to ignore the world outside.

A tiresome night followed, punctuated by spells with the shovel digging out the tents; the snowfall finally stopped around dawn. All that day we watched avalanches pour into the gorge around us



Kashmir to Manali





and became more confident of the security of our position.

Getting out of the gorge was all the motivation we needed for an early start the next day. Four hours of pounding our way over huge avalanche fans and a couple of exciting river crossings and swimming excursions brought us to the safety of the Warvan valley, and to sunshine. Ten minutes later, only a few hundred metres behind us, a huge avalanche rumbled into the gorge from which we'd escaped. I'd just been saying that 'it wasn't such a bad place, really'.

The Warvan valley was safe and wide. For several days we skied through villages full of laughing, smiling people. A welcoming committee would chase after us, fascinated by our 'snow feet'. Crowds gathered wherever we stopped. 'If you wish, you may beat the children, no objection', offered a local policeman. The people here were Muslims, raggedy souls who seemed resigned to their cold, isolated lives; unaware of boredom, yet excited by the weird diversion we provided.

The Warvan valley narrows in its upper reaches. For two days we traversed steep slopes above an open river, sometimes cutting steps and having to rope up. Above this, a wide glacial valley surrounded by steep, rocky peaks and enticing ski slopes, each a few kilometres

long, leads to the pass at Lonvilad Gali (4500 metres). We were all happy to be out of the gorges. Up here the scale of our world changed dramatically and our spirits rose accordingly. In a huge valley of ripples, silent and devastatingly white, a blanket of shadows and deceptive distances, we skied endlessly up a glacier to camp just below the pass in beautiful weather. A wonderful 20 kilometre downhill run took us to Pannikar in the Suru valley, and the first of our food drops.

tuneless mullah in the entire Muslim world.

Our host, Abdul Salam, was out dynamiting trout for dinner when we arrived. His family had been the keepers of our second cache of food for the previous 12 months and seemed somewhat disappointed that we had finally come to claim it.

The last leg of our journey would take us over two passes. The Kang La (5468 metres), a rarely used route into the Miyar valley, and the Rhotang Pass (3915



For two days we skirted Kun (7087 metres). Elusive and mysterious, the peak appeared from the clouds for only the briefest of tantalizing glimpses. In its narrowest sections the Suru was a bizarre landscape of ice sheets that rode up on each other like miniature tectonic plates. We were searching for Rangdum Gompa, and confirmation that we had left the Muslim territories. This forgotten outpost of Buddhist enlightenment appeared out of a snowstorm, perched on a small hill in the midst of a great, white plain. A gaggle of excited monks welcomed us to their ancient home; they could remember some Norwegian skiers who had passed this way ten years before—or had it been fifteen?

We left Rangdum Gompa with the monks cheering us down the hill; we were carrying mail to their villages over the Pensi La (4401 metres). Our symbolic half-way point and our third pass, it provided some great days' skiing down perfect slopes into Zaskar.

On the 17th day of our journey we reached Padum, the largest village yet, populated by a mixture of Buddhists and Muslims, with great bouldering, yaks everywhere, and possibly the most

metres) from the Chandra valley into Himachal Pradesh and Manali. In Padum this last leg had seemed a formality—false optimism.

It took us four days to reach the Kang La Glacier in stormy weather and high winds and to locate the pass. The crevasses of the Kang La posed no problems but as we crossed the pass in bitter cold, our visions of an effortless 70 kilometre descent of the Miyar Glacier were fast receding with increasing falls of snow. The Miyar is a long, gentle descent, but there was nothing gentle about the days of wading and floundering that followed. Our bodies were becoming worn and our tempers frayed.

Near the snout of the Miyar Glacier, on our coldest day, both my boots and one of Carol's broke, separated at the mid-sole. Our efforts at boot repair seemed futile as we flapped our way through the moraine, with regular stops to clear the snow and renew the tape.

Our food was running low and our physical condition was deteriorating, so we camped below the Miyar Glacier as another storm rolled in. For the next two days we wallowed in squalor; the tents a swamp during the day and frozen at

night. With little to eat, it was becoming increasingly difficult to generate heat; even the work of digging seemed to drain more warmth from us.

We decided we had to keep moving despite high winds, poor visibility and a metre of fresh snow. We managed only 12 kilometres for the day without losing much height, and there was still no sign of the highest villages. That night the poles of one tent gave up, but the weather cleared. It seemed a fair trade.

finally, an extraordinary night-time ride to Sissu in an army truck—rucksacks, skis and bodies piled in the back with a dozen young soldiers. There was a clandestine and desperate feeling to the night as we lurched round corners and smashed our way through snow-drifts. Silver peaks towered above us in the moonlight, glimpsed through gaps in the truck's awning. Huge, icy chasms cut into the snow-pack like shining tunnels on a ghost train.

missing pair that day, I accompanied the team back up to the Rhotang. The pair eventually turned up on the Chandra side, and we returned to Mhuri late and exhausted.

We finished our journey with a blasting two kilometre descent on perfect, crisp snow into the Kulu valley, alive with spring blossom. It was our 32nd day. A short walk, a taxi ride with 'Warriors of the Wasteland' blaring with unconscious irony on the stereo, and suddenly we were in the Manali bazaar being crushed by people: locals; rich, conspicuous Indian tourists; Tibetans; and westerners with that slightly torched, 'I've been in



The pleasures of school are much the same the world over. Khanjar, lower Miyar valley. Kingston. **Right,** Food! Carol Ankers and Huw Kingston collecting the first cache at Pannikar. Megan Bowden

After a cold night without food or sleep, we were all speculating wildly as to what we might find to eat in the villages of the Miyar valley. Would we even find the villages or were they no more than a myth? Later that day we reached Khanjar and feasted on potatoes and rice. We pushed on to the village of Gumba, where we were taken in by a smiling lama named Tashi. A night indoors allowed us to recover sufficiently to enjoy a session of chang, or potato spirit; the next morning's skiing was a distinctly wobbly process.

About ten kilometres above Udaipur and the Chandra valley we ran out of snow for the first time since leaving Lihinwan. After 28 days on skis we enjoyed the novelty of walking. Huw was narrowly missed by stone-fall in the gorge at the end of the Miyar valley, and the constant clatter from above inspired new energy in all of us.

After shopping in Udaipur we walked for two days up the Chandra valley, hitching a ride with the 'officer commanding' of the local army regiment and,

We left what we hoped would be our last camp, at Sissu, early and in darkness, and headed for the Rhotang Pass. There were many local people crossing the pass between the Chandra and Kulu valleys: road-workers, traders, kids, and old men and women. The Rhotang has a kind of carnival atmosphere to it, and it is a humbling experience to be with all these people on a high alpine pass. They in their sneakers and shawls, we in all our expensive gear. I felt overdressed and overburdened. Sitting on a rock near the top, I shared lunch with a family heading home to the Chandra after spending winter in Manali. Their small children seemed oblivious to the cold wind.

On the top of the pass our celebrations were brief; a few photos, a drink, and we plunged down towards the rescue station of Mhuri on the Kulu side of the pass, manned by the Indian Mountaineering Federation. The snow was heavy and deep down that side, and we decided to spend the night with the rescue team rather than flounder on down. There was a rescue that night; two old people had failed to arrive on the other side. The team borrowed our jackets and gloves, theirs being barely adequate for their work of protecting those who cross the pass. As the last person to have seen the



India too long' look about them. By the time we hit the restaurants the endless early starts, the cold and the trail-breaking had already begun to recede like a half-remembered dream.

Our long journey was over; Huw, Carol and Megan headed home, I went back into the hills for another trip. By the time I left India, things had changed. Rajiv Gandhi was just one day dead and Delhi eerily quiet as though before some approaching madness. Fires burned inexplicably on the edge of the city and soldiers lined the roads, adding to the tension. Back in a different world, I'd be in Changi airport in time for the televised funeral. ■

Jamie Serie has been skiing for 15 years. He has skied and climbed in Australia, New Zealand, the Andes and the Himalayas. His home is in Natimuk, Victoria, though he lived in Marysville during the winter of 1992 and worked with the Lake Mountain Ski School.

THE MESSAGE OF BLUE GUM FOREST

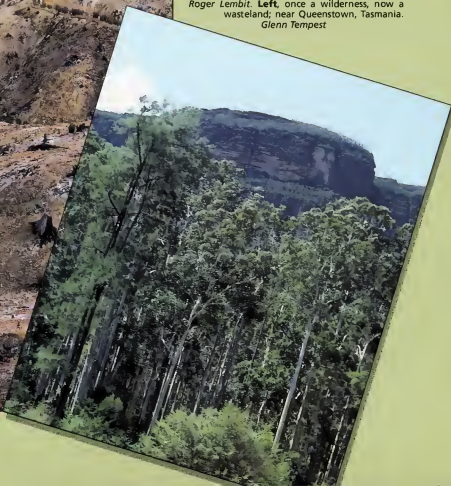
Lessons from a great conservation victory, with *Roger Lembit*



During the Easter break in 1931 a party of bushwalkers descended into the Grose River Gorge in the Blue Mountains on an exploratory trip. They reached a magnificent forest of Deane's blue gum at the junction of the Grose River and Govetts Creek, and were horrified to discover that the trees were being ring-barked in preparation for the planting of a walnut grove.

The bushwalkers discussed these operations with the lessee, who agreed to halt the work provided the walkers would raise enough money to buy out the lease.

The forest that started it all—Blue Gum Forest, at the junction of the Grose River and Govetts Creek, Blue Mountains National Park, New South Wales. Roger Lembit. **Left**, once a wilderness, now a wasteland; near Queenstown, Tasmania. Glenn Tempest



In the depths of the Great Depression the walkers combined forces with other conservationists to form the Blue Gum Forest Committee. The committee mobilized public support. Fund-raising efforts included several Blue Gum balls and social events, and the preparation of a booklet on walking tours. After considerable effort and with the help of a generous loan, the £150 necessary to buy out the lease was raised. On 2 September 1932 Blue Gum Forest was gazetted as a Reserve for Public Recreation. September 1992 thus marks the 60th anniversary of the protection of Blue Gum Forest.

That campaign 60 years ago was significant in the evolution of the conservation movement in Australia. Subsequent efforts by conservation groups have resulted in the protection of many popular bushwalking areas. National Parks now extend across most of the Blue Mountains, a large section of the Australian Alps, much of South-west Tasmania, the Flinders Ranges, and parts of the south-western corner of Western Australia.

Efforts to protect further remote wilderness areas such as the Kimberleys in Western Australia and Cape York in Queensland are increasing.

National Parks expenditure and government funding

State/ country	Expenditure, \$M	Revenue, \$M	Proportion of funding from government, %
New South Wales	49.9	12	76
Queensland	17.1	1.1	94
Western Australia	42.2	1.2	97
Tasmania	33.4	1.7	94
USA	594	21	96
Canada	400	33	92

Yet the battle for protection of significant natural areas is by no means over. A recent discussion paper, 'Wilderness in Australia', by Robertson and others, reveals that over 150 wilderness areas have been identified in Australia. Many of these are at least partly reserved in National Parks or reserves, but until the recent passage of wilderness legislation in Victoria (see opening item, Green Pages) only 18 were formally recognized under legislation or plans of management. Further legislative protection and recognition are likely to be given in coming months; wilderness assessment reports are under discussion in New South Wales and steps are being taken in other States to enact wilderness legislation. The authors of the report make a good case for a national Wilderness Protection Act to strengthen present initiatives by the States.

In recent years there has been increased conflict between those in favour of resource utilization and the supporters of wilderness protection. This is partic-

ularly so in regard to native forests, where the remaining timber supplies are often found in old-growth forests identified as wilderness. Even in those areas where large National Parks have been established, further action may be necessary to ensure that wilderness quality is maintained. Among the most obvious cases are the Victorian Alps, where logging and grazing continue to detract seriously from wilderness values. Further extensions to National Parks in South-west Tasmania and in the Blue Mountains are needed to enhance wilderness protection in those areas.

Management of wilderness areas within National Parks is also a matter of deep concern. The *Wilderness Red Index* for New South Wales, published by the Colong Foundation, discusses this topic. The *Red Index* states that the most significant management problems are associated with vehicular tracks. It is not always realized that these tracks are relatively new—most having been constructed within the last 30 to 40 years. In 1990 the Land Conservation Council found only four places in Victoria further than five kilometres from a further vehicular track. In 1960 the number was far greater.

Other wilderness management problems include horse-riding, the spread of feral animals and weeds, the presence of facilities such as power lines and river-gauging stations, and privately owned land within wilderness areas.

Effective management by State conservation authorities may be hampered by lack of government funding. The accompanying table (left), adapted from unpublished information compiled by the New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service during the late 1980s, shows the extent to which various National Parks services are funded by government.

Clearly, the proportion of government funding for National Parks in New South Wales falls short of international standards. The table also shows that the New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service has been extraordinarily successful in raising revenue from sources outside the government. The leader of the National Party and developer groups have been pressing for the service to raise even more money by opening up National Parks to tourist development. Ironically, the present level of revenue would be even higher had a previous Coalition government not entered into a controversial long-term lease agreement with Kosciusko-Thredbo Pty Ltd which requires only a very low annual fee.

Another interesting feature of the table is the relatively low expenditure on National Parks in Queensland. This reflects the fact that until recently the area of Queensland reserved in National Parks was less than two per cent. The international aim is a minimum of five per cent. Funding has since increased

Australia



dramatically and the budget for acquisitions alone exceeds \$10 million.

The pressure of people is another problem which will increasingly confront National Park managers and create a dilemma for wilderness enthusiasts.



Bushwalkers at Blue Gum Forest on the 50th anniversary of its preservation, in 1982. *Lembit, Right*, the price we pay—a minimal-impact walking track? Mt Field National Park, Tasmania. *David Noble*

It has been estimated that \$3 million is needed to repair damage to tracks in Royal National Park. Extensive track work and rehabilitation have been necessary in the alpine areas of Kosciuszko National Park and in Tasmania. There are increasing calls for the imposition of a permit system in areas such as the Western Arthur Range and the Kosciuszko Main Range.

Any move towards a permit system will be seen by some as an infringement of basic freedoms, yet the extent of damage caused by overuse is seriously detracting from wilderness values. Damage by bushwalkers will be used in arguments against wilderness protection by those who insist on being able to drive, mine and cut down trees wherever they please.

There is no doubt that great challenges await the people who aspire to emulate the feats of the Blue Gum Forest Committee. One important challenge arises from the fact that much unprotected wilderness is found in areas of great significance for Aboriginal people. The National Code of Management of Wilderness Areas proposed in Robertson's report includes the maintenance and restoration of relationships between Australia's indigenous people and their ancestral country as a wilderness management objective.

The close ties Aborigines have with the land are well recognized. Many wilder-

ness users profess a similar affinity for the land. This common feeling should provide a path for greater understanding between conservationists and Aborigines. Wilderness restoration should also receive more prominence. Some at least of the significant damage to wilderness which has taken place since Blue Gum Forest was protected must be reversed. Bushwalkers who were fortunate enough to explore areas now damaged by development are often the envy of younger walkers.

The closure of roads and vehicular tracks can lead to significant improvements in wilderness quality. Unfortunately, National Park managers have been slow to respond on this issue, fearful of the protests of four-wheel-



drivers. As a consequence, streams are polluted, biodiversity is reduced and soil erosion is rampant. A more ambitious project which would clearly demonstrate that we are serious about reversing the damage we have caused to the environment would be to restore the original Lake Pedder in Tasmania, scene of a major conservation battle during the early 1970s. Whilst this may look costly and impractical at first glance, estimates suggest that it would in fact cost much less than was spent to save the Franklin River.

To solve park management problems resulting from overuse will require the combined efforts of managers and wilderness users. Park managers are under a great deal of pressure: they face competing demands from user groups and developers; management problems are very great; and funding is limited. They should nevertheless avoid the temptation to impose decisions without consultation. The sense of freedom encountered in a wilderness area should be reflected and acknowledged by the policies adopted to ensure that wilderness is protected.

The anti-wilderness views of some park managers will have to be overcome as well. In New South Wales, field staff have actively opposed wilderness management policies of the National

Parks & Wildlife Service—to the extent that they have encouraged activities specifically prohibited in plans of management. In some parks they use motorized transport in remote areas without regard for the principles of wilderness management, and thus seriously detract from the enjoyment of park users. National Parks are for everyone, not just for park managers.

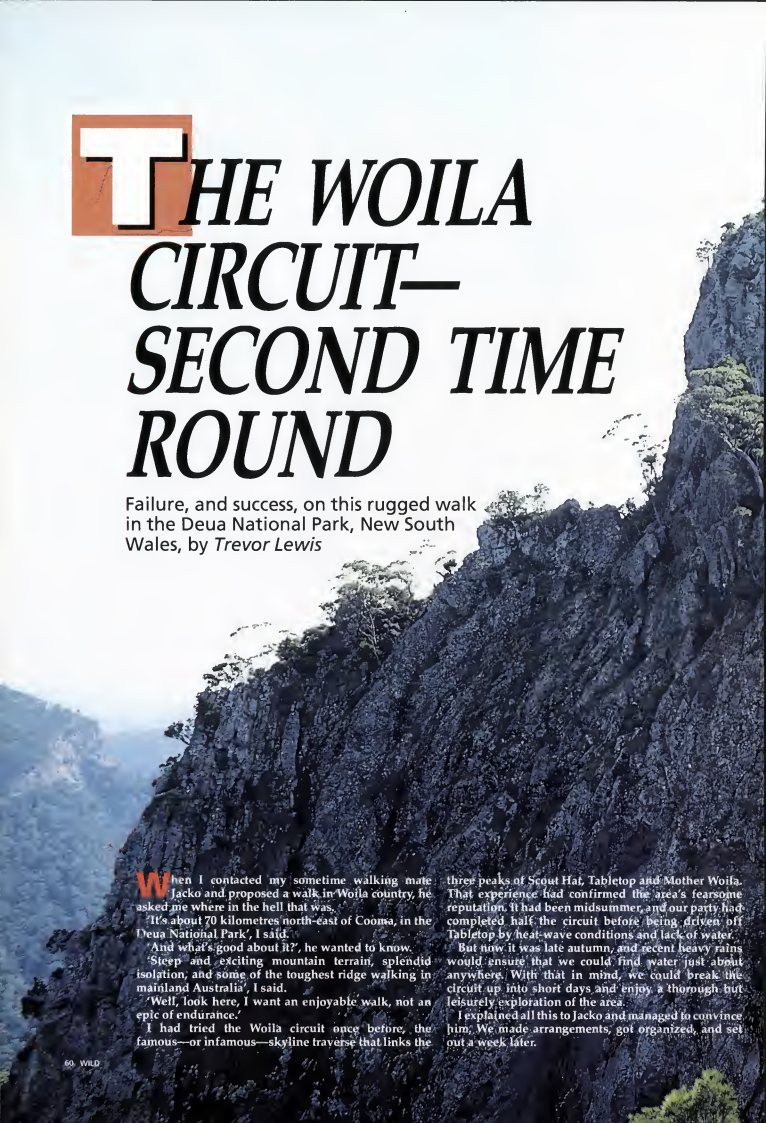
The potential for conflict between park managers and wilderness enthusiasts should be resolved by co-operative efforts. Bushwalkers should contribute to park management as well as donate money, time and effort to wilderness protection campaigns. Active park management assistance is already being provided by bushwalkers through track maintenance and clean-up weekends. In Victoria, the Department of Conservation & Environment has invited walkers to help in the control of blackberries in remote areas. Wilderness users need to consider how they can contribute to wilderness restoration. There is room for improvement in the attitudes of wilderness users towards the environment. The popular idea that people need to be guided through wild places in recipe-book fashion is wrong. We must provide an example to wilderness users and take steps to ensure that they sensibly reduce their impact on the environment.

Whilst many of the gains in nature conservation over the past 60 years have taken place in areas which were considered by many to be useless scrub, the conservation battles of the future will increasingly be focused on 'productive land'. Landholders and developers will need to become involved in conservation if biodiversity protection is to be achieved. The early conservationists at Blue Gum recognized the rights of the lessees and set about protecting the forest without infringing upon those rights. The interest of landholders in conservation is increasing through the work of land-care groups and catchment committees. However, the conservation movement has been slow to seize on these initiatives as a way of improving management of areas with wilderness qualities.

Development interests have been attempting to use Australia's recession to promote exploitation over the need to protect the wild environment. The fact that the Blue Gum Forest Committee was responsible for a most significant early conservation victory at a time of even greater economic hardship is a valuable lesson for today's conservationists.

The battle to protect the wild places of Australia continues. The success of the Blue Gum Forest Committee should inspire and guide future conservation efforts. ■

Roger Lembit has been a Special Adviser to Wild since issue 13. A dedicated bushwalker and conservationist, he lives in Sydney, where he works as an environmental consultant.



THE WOILA CIRCUIT— SECOND TIME ROUND

Failure, and success, on this rugged walk in the Deua National Park, New South Wales, by Trevor Lewis

When I contacted my sometime walking mate Jacko and proposed a walk in Woila country, he asked me where in the hell that was.

'It's about 70 kilometres north-east of Cooma, in the Deua National Park', I said.

'And what's good about it?', he wanted to know.

'Steep and exciting mountain terrain, splendid isolation, and some of the toughest ridge walking in mainland Australia', I said.

'Well, look here, I want an enjoyable walk, not an epic of endurance.'

'I had tried the Woila circuit once before, the famous—or infamous—skyline traverse that links the

three peaks of Scout Hat, Tabletop and Mother Woila. That experience had confirmed the area's fearsome reputation, it had been midsummer, and our party had completed half the circuit before being driven off Tabletop by heat-wave conditions and lack of water.'

But now it was late autumn, and recent heavy rains would ensure that we could find water just about anywhere. With that in mind, we could break the circuit up into short days and enjoy a thorough but leisurely exploration of the area.

I explained all this to Jacko and managed to convince him. We made arrangements, got organized, and set out a week later.

WILD BUSHWALKING



Pikes Saddle, where we left the car to begin the walk, is 1220 metres above sea level. Over 100 metres higher, Big Badja Hill beckoned, so we left our packs at the fire-track junction and made a side trip there. No more than a rocky protuberance on a plateau-like ridge, this summit is none the less one of the highest points on the Monaro's eastern rim, and from its cairn we could see both the Pacific Ocean and the Snowy Mountains. Nearer, but still remote and half-hidden by intervening hills and ridges, the crags of Mother Woila, Tabletop and Scout Hill jutted.

We returned to our packs and started our walk—or, rather, our walk in, for we spent the better part of that first day bruising our feet on the fire track that runs east, uphill and down, finally reaching Dampier Trig on the Minuma Range. The track passes through pleasant stands of forest and touches on the treeless, swampy flats where the Shoalhaven River rises, but gave us only fleeting glimpses of the Woila peaks.

A gradual climb led to Dampier Trig. I had expected something grand here, a panorama taking in ocean, Deua catchment, Woila country and tableland. No such prospect greeted us; the cairn stood in the midst of a vigorous regrowth forest and the only view was of slim tree trunks reaching for the sky.

We made our entry in the log-book installed by the National Parks & Wildlife Service and noted that we belonged to a minority; most who had passed this way were four-wheel-drivers. We were thankful to leave the wheel tracks behind and venture into terrain which is so rough that bulldozers are never likely to tame it.

A steep, loose and rocky descent in a forest of many-trunked saplings gave us a taste of the walking conditions ahead. Rather than stay with the watershed, we headed east of south, aiming to intercept a small creek. It was four o'clock and the late-autumn afternoon shadows were growing; already we needed to look for a campsite.

We found what we sought, but only just. The creek flowed in a steep-sided gully and the ground was everywhere composed of rock fragments. We pitched the tent using rocks for pegs; an abundance of dead bracken and tree-free fronds gave us plenty of material to pad the floor.

The next morning we climbed out of our ravine and emerged from forest to walk through a couple of hectares of casuarina heathland. Then the forest closed in again as we proceeded south along the range. The lack of visibility made it hard to be sure of our position, but an east-facing, cliffy area gave us a glimpse of the Deua catchment and eased our navigational worries. Not far beyond, we steered off the main watershed to find the spur that would lead us to Mother Woila.



'A light frost bleached the tussocks and streamers of mist hung in the valley.' Mother Woila from Woila Clearing on a crisp morning. Rob Jung. **Right**, Tabletop and Scout Hat. Roger Lembit. **Previous pages**, spectacular ridge walking—approaching Tabletop from Scout Hat. Jung

Blue sky showed between the tree trunks. Moments later, we reached the edge of a precipice. It was our first full-on view of Woila country, and it was one worth savouring. Immediately to our south-east rose Mother Woila's double-humped peak, circled by grey and ochre cliffclines; the unnamed 'gully' beneath our feet resembled a slightly scaled-down version of Kanangra Grand Gorge in the Blue Mountains, lacking only the waterfalls.

Our ridge narrowed to a razorback and took a nosedive. Walking gave way to scrambling. Small but impassable sheer-offs caused a few changes of direction. Finally we descended over scree and fallen logs to reach the saddle which I had proposed to use for our 'base camp' to climb Mother Woila.

'You call this a campsite?', said Jacko. 'Well, we can put the tent just here...' I indicated a rough hollow among the logs and boulders. All it had going for it was a more or less horizontal orientation and a few tufts of grass sprouting from cracks in the rock. 'This is wilderness bushwalking. No hot showers, no wall-to-wall carpet.'

'Very funny', said Jacko. 'Okay, let's see what we can do with it.'

We raised the old-fashioned Paddy-made tent, using rocks to secure each of its multitude of guys. Then I grabbed our collection of containers and went to find water in the gully on the south-east fall of the saddle.

The gully dropped at an alarming angle and was full of scree, stinging nettle, and bits and pieces of smashed-up trees that had lost the battle to maintain a foothold on the precipices above. Before long, our campsite was high overhead. This was becoming a troublesome exercise, but I couldn't afford to return empty-handed so I drove on into the depths. Just as I was beginning to despair, a tributary watercourse appeared and rewarded me with a trickle of water.

I filled all the containers and scurried back up the ravine. I reached the campsite perspiring and out of breath.

Jacko had lit a fire, and we put on a billy for lunch.

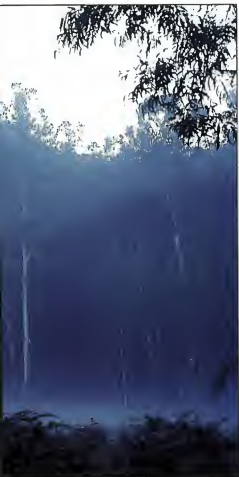
'Was the water difficult to get to?', he asked.

'Not really', I replied.

'You took some time.'

'Well, who's in a hurry?'

I looked about me. I, for one, was pleased that we had chosen to camp here. Bushwalking life is full of memorably good campsites—places which possess every natural amenity and a glorious view. This was not one of them. It had a view, to be sure, but beyond that its appeal lay in its perversity. The tent



perched at a jaunty angle at the foot of a slope that looked like nature's rubbish heap—a dumping-ground for rocks and dead trees. On the saddle's opposite aspect a giant prow of rock reared into the sky against a foreground of flowering wattles. And that desperate bash to get water completed a picture of 'living on the edge'.

Mother Woila's summit was little more than a stone's throw from where we sat, but the cliffline meant that we would approach it in a roundabout way. We started by contouring round a steep, slippery, grass-tufted slope, empty of trees except for a scatter of wattles. We then turned the corner of a spur and swung on to the south face of the mountain. Here we found easier walking on a 'wombat parade' formation at the foot of the main cliffline. Ferns sprouted from every ledge and crack, and moss-carpeted soils moistened the rock. The feel of the place echoed many cliffside localities in the Budawangs, except that these Woila cliffs culminate not in a plateau top but in a steep and convex slope. Thus the trees which cling to the top edge of the cliff lead a precarious existence and, seen from below, appear to lean almost horizontally over the abyss. Gravity had claimed a few of them and we had to clamber over, through, and round the wreckage of the casualties.

The cliffline narrowed and then folded into a gully full of scree which provided

a staircase to the top—or rather, a sensation similar to walking up an escalator the wrong way. We reached the saddle between Mother Woila's two humps and made for the higher one. More steep climbing led at last to the summit. I had heard Mother Woila described as the most difficult 'bush-walker's peak' in New South Wales—in its distance from roads and tracks, its difficult terrain, and the steepness of the final ascent. Well, I could certainly agree with that. To reach this summit and return within a weekend would make a serious challenge; more than I'd want to take on.

Especially when the reward for my effort would be this: a plateau about the

We settled for the night on that lumpy tent floor, with much shuffling around to find more or less comfortable positions. Still, sleep came easily after the day's exercise and we woke only slightly the worse for wear. Facing us first thing was a steep and scrambly climb out of the saddle to regain the Deua-Woila watershed. As we gained height we enjoyed the spectacle of morning sun highlighting Mother Woila's multi-coloured cliffs and, across the shadow-filled valley, the double peak and buttressing ridges of Scout Hat.

The ridge levelled off, the forest closed in and the views disappeared. We headed south along the main watershed and arrived at the edge of a conglomerate



size of a footy oval, completely covered by forest. It felt more like the middle of nowhere than the top of a mountain. An understory of head-high saplings further interfered with visibility. To the south there was an indistinct glimpse of Tabletop; in all other directions we saw nothing but vegetation.

Without good reason to hang around, and with the lengthening afternoon shadows urging us to get a move on, we descended the gully, made our way round the cliffline, and reached our camp just in time to see the sun drop behind the skyline of the Great Dividing Range.

We needed more water, and Jacko offered to take his turn. Moments after his departure I began to worry; he had not taken a torch, and my nonchalant attitude at lunch-time might have misled him regarding the difficulties involved.

I lit a fire. Time passed and Jacko did not return. It occurred to me for the first time just how difficult it would be to arrange a rescue from here. A rumble of distant stonefall made my hair stand on end.

I was calculating how long it would take me to run to Pikes Saddle when Jacko arrived, intact.

'That was bloody desperate!', he said.

'Relax, Jacko', I said. 'You're safe, and we've got water. That's all that matters.'

cliffline. We looked across a deep valley at Tabletop's massive north face. A roller-coaster razorback of a ridge linked it to the peninsula where we stood.

We found a way through the cliffline below overhangs which would have made comfortable shelters had water been available nearby—which I doubted. Back on the skyline of the ridge, a series of vertical drop-offs confronted us; route-finding problems kept us entertained for some time. Finally this fractured terrain gave way to a smoother run on a narrow spine obstructed only by fallen trees. Where Tabletop's north and west faces intersected, a spur provided us with a steep but no-hands ascent to the summit plateau.

Through the morning I had encouraged Jacko with promises of salubrious camping on this kilometre high hill. Privately I had feared that we would have to put up with another make-do campsite amongst the rocks and thickets. It came as a pleasant surprise, then, to pass through a belt of scrub at the plateau's edge and emerge into a white-ash forest devoid of understory and luxuriantly carpeted with soft native grasses.

I dropped my rucksack.

'Here's our campsite. What do you think of it?'

'Not bad', said Jacko. 'How about water? Do you need abseiling gear to get it?'

'Let's hope not', I said.

We headed into the shallow gully that drains most of the plateau, then drops over its southern edge to form one of the heads of Running Creek, a major tributary of the upper Deua. This was the



Mother Woila's steep defences, and the saddle where the author and Jacko camped, are clearly seen from the edge of Tabletop's plateau. *Lembit*

gully on which we had pinned our hopes on that first trip to Woila country, only to find it dry. This time, a short stroll led us to the first running water, well before the drop-off at the southern edge of the plateau.

In contrast to our headlong retreat from the mountain on that first occasion, we now had the luxury of plenty of time in which to have a good look at the place. After lunch we went out to explore the perimeters of the plateau. In every direction we looked out from cliff-tops at a sea of wild country; ridges and spurs, gullies and gorges—the landscape spread out before us seemed like a bushwalker's dream come true.

In my memory's album there's a snapshot of me, eight years old, gazing at the vastness of the southern Blue Mountains from Echo Point Look-out, Katoomba. The spectacle had awed and frightened me. I remember adults telling me how dangerous the bush was, how easily you could get lost in it. Was it then that I decided to become a bushwalker? I don't know. But Tabletop certainly felt

like one of the high points on a lifetime's journey. You could lose yourself out here—that was the feeling, but now it lacked the fear component. The great Australian bush, which had seemed such a foreign territory back then, now felt like home.

In the morning a cold, clean wind swept the plateau and a clear sky promised further perfect walking weather as we set out for Woila Clearing over Scout Hat. At Tabletop's southern edge we ventured on to another spectacular razorback and stayed with it until a sheer-off stopped us. A nervous shuffle on narrow ledges deposited us in a scree-filled gully which got us past the most problematic bit of the descent. Back on the skyline, we headed south, then turned west on to the subsidiary ridge linking Scout Hat to the watershed. The peak made an imposing picture as we approached it, but the final ascent presented no route-finding puzzles; one good hold led smoothly and logically to the next, and before we knew it we were standing on the summit, peering through a fringe of cliff-hugging she-oaks at tree-tops in the valley far below.

The descent began with more scrambling and scree-bashing but the surface conditions became easier as we lost height. Six hundred metres down, the transformation was total. We found ourselves romping through a park-like, open forest, and the grass beneath our feet felt as smooth as a bowling-green after three days on the flinty ridges of Woila country.

The sound of running water let us know we had nearly reached the valley floor. The first stream we encountered was the unnamed tributary which drains the triangle made up of Mother Woila, Tabletop and Scout Hat. We forded it on stepping-stones and pushed through an

area of tall fern and bracken to reach parkland again. We crossed a small rise and there it lay before us—Woila Clearing, and the conclusion of the 'hardest ridge walk in mainland Australia'.

Bristling with tall tussocks and full of swampy areas and billabongs, the heart of the clearing proved to be less hospitable than it had appeared from a distance, but on its better drained margin we found an expanse of turf that made a fine place to camp.

Though we were just 300 metres above sea level, the night was very cold—our coldest so far. In the morning a light frost bleached the tussocks and streams of mist hung in the valley. In spite of the temperature Jacko rose at first light, built a fire and had boiled the billy by the time I emerged. Grateful as I was, his energy surprised me; I had always been the early riser until now.

The first sunshine was shafting down through the river oaks as we took our boots off to wade the cold waters of Woila Creek. Ahead of us lay a 1000 metre climb to the Great Dividing Range near Big Badja Hill, and Jacko seemed determined to take it in his stride. He powered up that big hill like a well-oiled machine, and I struggled to keep up. Again I wondered what was driving him. Could it have been simple impatience? I had seen other people similarly afflicted on the last day of a walk. It highlighted the difference between his attitude and mine: I prefer to slow right down on the last day, to spin it out for as long as possible.

The spur we followed had many undulations and shifts of direction. Full tree cover persisted the whole way except for one place about 300 metres above the valley floor, where a small cliff created a window in the foliage and gave us a last close-up view of Mother Woila, Tabletop and Scout Hat.

Six hundred metres higher, the appearance of montane forest and granite boulders signalled that we were leaving the coastal scarp country for the world of the tablelands. Several undulations followed, and some confusion in dense scrub (which Jacko didn't even appear to notice). A final steep incline led to the flat top of the Great Divide.

The fire track soon appeared and, not far beyond, the ti-tree-fringed outcrops of Big Badja Hill. I wanted to climb it again, but Jacko couldn't see the point.

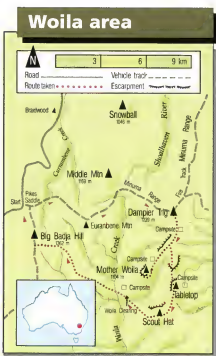
'It's a good view, but I've already seen it', he said.

'Would you do the Woila circuit again?', I asked him.

'I'll admit I have no burning desire to', he said.

A good trip, but he probably wouldn't do it again. Maybe he's the lucky one. Once or twice certainly wasn't enough for me. ■

Trevor Lewis (see Contributors, Wild no 1) lives in Canberra, where he has worked in a variety of jobs. He is a keen writer who has written of his walking experiences in Australia, New Zealand and Nepal.



THE MACQUARIE RIVER

Varied paddling on this famous New South Wales river,
with Yvonne McLaughlin

The Macquarie is not a well-known river from a canoeing point of view, but it has much to offer to every sort of paddler. There is exciting white water in the upper sections, and lower down are tranquil, meandering, flat sections. It lures people who want to paddle in a remote area, those who want to see plenty of native flora and fauna or beautiful scenery, and those who want to swim or to camp.

The Macquarie River rises in the north-western Blue Mountains; it was named after Lachlan Macquarie, Governor of New South Wales during the early part of the 19th century. It flows past the cities of Bathurst and Dubbo, then turns northwards past Narromine and Warren before joining the Barwon River east of Walgett, about 1000 kilometres from its headwaters.

At the Cudgegong River confluence, east of Wellington, below the white-water sections, the Macquarie has been dammed to form Lake Burrendong. This provides irrigation water to the farmers of the Macquarie valley and reliable water levels for paddlers during the irrigation season.

When to visit

There is no 'best time' to paddle the upper section (above Lake Burrendong) as water levels are unpredictable on the whole. There can be good water flows at any time of the year.

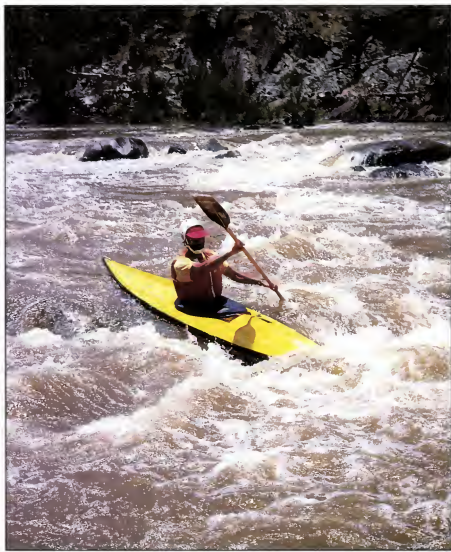
Water levels in the lower section (below Lake Burrendong) are largely dependent on irrigation releases from Lake Burrendong. The irrigation season on the river lasts from August to May, and the most consistent releases are during the height of summer. The amount discharged can vary from 5000 to 12 000 megalitres a day. The best times to paddle the Macquarie Marshes are late winter or early spring. It can get too hot for comfort during summer.

Maps

A good general map for the upper section is the CMA 1:500 000 sheet *Golden West*. As well, the CMA 1:150 000 *Bathurst-Orange District Map* shows good detail of this area. The CMA maps *Golden West* and *North West Country* show the general locality of the lower section. The relevant 1:250 000 maps may be used for detailed trip planning if necessary.

Access

There are several access points to the upper section; Freemantle Bridge, about 30 kilometres west of Bathurst, is a popular one. There is easy access to the lower section of the river at Lake Burrendong. A track leading off from the Water Resources Commission offices near the dam wall provides a suitable launching point well clear of the turbulent outlets of the dam. Downstream from the lake there are many entry and exit points.



Enjoyable white water—albeit with a tinge of brown—on the Macquarie River. Both photos McLaughlin collection

Camping

In the upper section, there is excellent camping on many beautiful, sandy beaches and where the bridle track follows the river (see recommended maps). In the lower section, formal camping is available at Burrendong State Recreation Area and there are innumerable opportunities for riverside camping once on the river. Some of these, such as the Lions Caravan Park in Dubbo, are quite formal; others, like Warren Weir, eight kilometres upstream from Warren, are

somewhat less so; the remainder are set amongst open woodlands along the river. In general, the sections downstream from Dubbo are better for riverside camping than those upstream.

The trip

The upper Macquarie is of grade 2–3 standard. It is a good trip for the white-water enthusiast because something interesting is always happening. There are plenty of rapids and pebble races, and the flat sections seem to be well positioned—and are not too long.

Many trips on the Macquarie begin at Bathurst or at the Freemantle Bridge and finish at the Turon River confluence. This section contains an impressive grade 3–4 rapid

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known as the Forge. The beautiful scenery through which the river flows, the interesting paddling, sunny weather and wide beaches make it an excellent trip.

If paddling during the summer, be prepared with sunscreen, sun visors and plenty of liquid refreshment. The river valley seems to hold the heat, and the sun shimmering on white water can create an uncomfortable glare.

At certain water levels the current is quite fast. This can be very pleasant and makes for easy paddling. You need to be wary, however, when approaching a rapid or an obstacle in the river. In some places where there are rocky outcrops in the river bed, casuarinas and bottlebrush have taken hold. Paddlers have to be ready occasionally to duck under a low-lying branch or to break out of the main current and paddle round a blockage, through a side channel.

The first day's paddling is pure enjoyment: lots of good, bouncy rapids, some longer rock gardens, and several single-drop rapids of about a metre.

The Forge is approached on the second day, approximately seven hours' paddling from the start of the trip. The approach contains some interesting grade 3 rapids and the Forge itself is set in spectacular granite country. This rapid is a series of drops through a steep chasm about 50 metres long. The entire rapid should be carefully scouted before attempting to paddle part or all of it.

The last two drops of the Forge are the most difficult and should only be attempted by experienced paddlers and with other people positioned appropriately in case assistance should be required. This rapid and its surroundings are spectacular and photogenic, and it is worth spending some time here.

There is a relatively easy portage to the final drop of the rapid over a few small rocks and a sandy beach on the left bank. The view of the last part of the rapid from the tall rocky outcrop beside it is great. Everyone who

portages gets this view because to complete the portage you have to clamber up the rocks with your boat and slide down the 60' rock face into the deep water on the other side. This is not as bad as it sounds. An effective technique is to let your boat fall the last few metres and then jump into the water after it—very refreshing on a hot day!

There is access to this section of the river at Howards Bridge picnic area, down the

weirs at Dubbo—above the township and downstream from the railway bridge—and at Narromine, Gin Gin, Warren and Marebone.

Paddling on the Macquarie in outback New South Wales is very pleasant. Trips need not be 'expeditions', as enjoyable day trips can be made from a number of places. Longer trips can be very rewarding, but equipment and food must be well organized. Protection from the sun is always a high priority. The water in



Putting the notes to the test—the portage of the Forge ends with a 60' slide into deep water.

Winburndale Rivulet. If the rivulet is high it provides fast access to the Macquarie but no exit; if the level is medium to low, you can get into and out of the river at this point.

It is 30 kilometres from Howards Bridge to the Turon River confluence. Different parts of the river can be paddled on day trips here as there are many natural picnicking and swimming spots along the bridge track. The paddling is still most enjoyable with rapids of grade 2–3 standard although they are not quite so frequent as in the earlier section.

The beautiful scenery continues, with Monaghans Bluff, a spectacular cliff face on the right bank, providing an excellent place for photography.

Overall this section supplies first-class canoeing, with good rapids, beautiful scenery and excellent camping. The car shuttle for the complete trip is rather tedious but well worth the effort.

The minimum level for canoeing this section is one metre on the Denison Bridge gauge in Bathurst.

The most frequently paddled parts of the lower Macquarie are between Lake Burrendong and Narromine. This section offers excellent grade 1–2 paddling, and paddlers can pick a trip of a length that suits them. Downstream from Narromine the river is quite isolated and there is the opportunity for good extended trips.

Beyond Dubbo the Macquarie River reaches out into the far west of New South Wales. Although the water is mostly flat, the current is swift in many places and there are irrigation

this part of the Macquarie is brown and unappealing to drink, so take some sort of additive (such as a cordial base) or alternative drinks.

Paddling in the Macquarie Marshes is very interesting for those with good navigational skills. The Macquarie Marshes Nature Reserve was proclaimed in 1955 and covers 18 000 hectares, forming a permanent refuge for many forms of bird life including brolgas, ibis and pelicans. A proportion of the water released from Lake Burrendong every year is allocated to maintain the aquatic habitat of the marshes.

The river takes an indeterminate path through the Macquarie Marshes. There are many channels, all of which look alike, and it is easy to become geographically embarrassed amongst the kumbungi reed beds. As though to compensate, the bird life is profuse and truly fascinating. The southern marshes begin at Oxley Station and have a central channel (Monkey Creek) which is not always easy to follow. At Mole Station a number of channels join up for a short distance, providing easy paddling, then divide again to form the northern marshes.

Where Bulgera Creek joins the 'river' from the east, the Bora Channel is formed and navigation becomes much easier. The river reforms at Bells Bridge, 13 kilometres west of Carinda. Mathaguy Creek and the Castle-reagh River join the Macquarie before it flows into the Barwon River between Walgett and Brewarrina. ■

Yvonne McLaughlin (see Contributors in Wild 7) is Wild's Contributing Editor for canoeing. She has been paddling canoes and kayaks for a long time, and is a qualified instructor, and co-author of five paddling guides.

Macquarie River



W

ESTERN TASMANIA

The natural glory of the most spectacular part of the island State, by *Ted Mead*









Little pygmy possum—found only in parts of Tasmania and Kangaroo Island, South Australia. **Left**, atmospherics in the rugged Western Arthur Range. **Far left**, autumn colours in the Du Cane Range. **Previous pages**, highland lake, South-west National Park.

New Editions



Two views of the Alpine Expedition model

The 1993 Expedition Pack Series models from Wilderness Equipment bring you a new balance. Our proven design philosophy and standards remain unchanged. It's the practical features that have been extended and refined. Consider the following advantages:

- **Keep it simple.** Choose from four different sizes in any model, all with fully interchangeable hip and shoulder harnesses. Your WE retailer will build a pack that fits you perfectly. It will be clean, strong and comfortable.
- **A harness system with no short cuts.** Perfect contours, non-synthetic body surfaces, genuine Evoxite™ (not just 'EVA') and high-density PU foams, hip wing plates, adjustable lumbar thickness and non-slip webbing.
- **The adjustments you need.** Precision is made for all the fine trimming of load distribution, stability and bag shape.
- **The best ventilation possible.** Only WE packs provide an adjustable air gap between the lumbar and the shoulder harness without any sacrifice of stability. Part of the secret is a frame that will not collapse or distort under load or rough handling.
- **A bag shape that lets you choose** capacity, load distribution and balance according to the situation. WE packs have excellent top access as well as big low-down capacity. Take your walking pack skiing, your alpine pack walking.
- **A unique bag fabric.** WE Expedition Packs use lightweight, high-strength corespun canvases to achieve a significant weight saving.
- **Practical features.** Including extendable top covers and throats, big top pockets, weatherproof back pockets, attachments for optional side pockets (and back pocket on Alpine model) and mesh panels to tuck harnesses under for travel.
- **Proven and proudly Australian made.** Over 10 years in the field, all over the world, and covered by a lifetime guarantee.

LOOK FOR THE WE LOGO...



PO Box 83, Fremantle, WA 6160
Uncompromised Design

RUCKSACKS FOR BUSHWALKING

Simon Head goes hunting in packs

This survey of rucksacks aims to give you a comprehensive overview of those packs on the Australian market of more than 60 litres in claimed size and recommended for bushwalking. A limit of four models from each manufacturer has been imposed; most of those manufacturers listed make other models as well.

The survey does not consider construction methods or materials (beyond telling you the main fabric of which every pack is made), nor how to select a pack that fits. Those things have been amply covered in past *Wild* surveys still available, most recently in *Wild* no 35. All the main brand names to be found in Australian specialist retail shops at the moment are included, as are some that are distributed widely outside the specialist market. Packs made by small manufacturers and available only directly from them have not been listed.

No attempt is made to assess 'good quality' or whether a particular rucksack is especially appropriate for use in Australian conditions. I will only say that no one rucksack will fit everybody or suit all needs. The best way to get what you want is to try on a few different types and brands and talk to staff in more than one shop.

The following comments have been made by the various manufacturers (or by their advertising agencies) and are presented with only minimal modification (mainly for length). I hope they will give you an idea of the range of companies making rucksacks and of their policies.

Aiking Equipment. A few years ago Andrew, the manager of a Melbourne-based outdoor-equipment repair service, began to make things for his friends to use in the bush. Since then he has diversified, and now produces some of the most straightforward, robust gear for bushwalking on the market.

A benefit of repairing a wide range of brands and designs is the constant feedback one receives from the public about what works—and about what might work best. For example, the Base II bushwalking pack is a clean-lined, fixed-harness, 'no-frills' carrier of large loads with little to bring unwelcome surprises. Furthermore, the consistent use of 12-ounce canvas, 1000-denier Cordura and closed-cell foam gives Aiking products a longer life expectancy than many of the imported brands.

An indication of our commitment to research and development has been the continual modification of models in our range. Whilst some shop staff may be perplexed from time to time, customers get the latest refinements in design and materials—a benefit only local companies can offer.



Live cargo—Sonja Steffen climbing Cotter Gap Rocks, Australian Capital Territory, with a little help from father Will. Carrie Steffen

Bergans. Why buy Bergans of Norway? First, because Bergans has history and permanence on its side. Bergans is not just a name behind a label. The company has been manufacturing since 1906, making it the oldest surviving rucksack manufacturer in the world.

Secondly, when one lives in a mountainous country, the design of equipment which is to be used every day must be perfect. Every innovation is field-tested by Norwegians, hiking, climbing and cross-country skiing. Perhaps this is why the Bergans pack is so closely associated with the SAS. You don't have to be a commando, though, to benefit from a Bergans pack, be it internal- or external-framed. Bergans has packs for specific needs: travel, mountaineering and

JUST RELEASED

AN EXCITING NEW RUCKSACK GUARANTEED TO LAST YOU A LIFETIME

At last! A rucksack made in Australia by a bushwalker who knows what he's on about.

Andrew King, the man behind the AIKING product, has spent much of his life in the Australian outdoors, finding out from bushwalkers like you what you really want from your gear. Andrew has repaired more rucksacks than anyone else in Australia, so he knows how *not* to make a pack, too. You'll be pleased to hear (as we were!) that Andrew has not compromised on quality to meet a budget. Every model has been tried and tested in Australia by bushwalkers just like you.



AIKING
STRZELECKI

Each feature is designed to perform—and perform they do. Here are just a few:

- Fully adjustable harness
- Contoured shoulder-straps
- Telescopic lid and throat
- Two mat attachment points
- Double reinforced base and front
- Map and wand pocket
- Optional front pocket
- Single or double compartment

These features combine to make any AIKING pack as comfortable to wear on your 100th kilometre as it was on your first.

Made from hard-wearing, Australian-made 12-ounce waterproof canvas and reinforced with Cordura, every pack is triple stitched, bar-tacked and bound at all stress points to give you a bombproof pack that will last you a lifetime—we guarantee it!



AIKING

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trekking—in short, a carrying system with models and volumes to suit every individual. The packs are extremely versatile with, for example, additional side pockets, super-comfortable padded hip-belt, and adjustable stabilizing straps.

Berghaus. Cyclops II has a reputation as one of the strongest load-carrying systems available. The Anatomic back system gives the comfortable and stable carry demanded in the harshest of environments. Strength and durability are the corner-stones of Cyclops II. Features include tough Ardura 1000 fabric; Advent fabric on all body-contact areas; all major seams double-sewn and bound; stress-points heavily bar-tacked for strength; reinforced base; top compression-straps; generous lid pockets; and the Berghaus exclusive tape retainers.

Caribee. The Caribee name has been synonymous with camping for more than 15 years. Over the last six years in particular there have been many new lines introduced, many discontinued, product features have been continuously updated and innovations implemented. Our rucksack range consists of nine styles in both high-density nylon and Cordura.

Features such as dual compartments with drop-through flaps appear in three models. Five offer side-pockets and some have a nylon extension for additional storage. All our packs are PU-coated for extra water-repellency. All seams are internally taped, we use only nylon webbing, and all loose ends are heat-sealed, rolled over and stitched, thus preventing buckles from becoming detached. All our buckles are Nifco brand.

Our harnesses incorporate the new Caribee CB back system, an improved system using a webbing ladder for height adjustment and a flap secured with Velcro. Additional padding has been fitted down the sides of the pack for comfort. With the new harness our packs can be adjusted more precisely, quickly and efficiently than ever.

DMH Trendsetter. DMH Trendsetter strives to offer true value for money in all its products. They are designed 'in house' as a result of experience, observation, discussion with retailers, and direct feedback from end users. A new design can take up to 14 months to develop from conception to finished product. Special emphasis is placed on materials and components. For example, most of the Trendsetter range of rucksacks and travel packs are made of a heavy-duty, cold-coated fabric which is extremely durable. Heavy-duty zips are used where required; stress areas are appropriately reinforced; heavy-duty webbing and quality buckles are used; and workmanship and finishing benefit the performance demanded and expected of our packs.

Fairydawn. At Fairydawn we make sure that your pack will last the distance. Our packs are triple-stitched, back-tacked, overlapped and reinforced, and are individually sewn. Every pack is subject to no fewer than four quality-control procedures during its construction.

Fairydawn packs are designed to fulfil several criteria: the back padding is positioned both to protect the spine and to support the spinal muscles. The shoulder-straps on the harness are an extension of this support. The

lumbar pad is the pack's structural and postural pivot point, allowing the load to be directly transferred down your back. The hip-belt distributes and stabilizes the weight of the pack and fits exactly to your hips for maximum efficiency and comfort.

First Light. These packs are manufactured with a unique structural harness system developed to deal with the two fundamental flaws in 'internal frame' design: 1 the lack in current pack design of a true frame, a structure that allows the load to be distributed in the most direct manner over the body; 2 the failure to load the pelvis—the primary weight-carrying point of the body—appropriately.

The human skeleton evolved to carry weight with the pelvis as the most efficient point. The strongest area for load-carrying in the pelvic region is the sacrum, a sturdy, rigid series of vertebrae at the base of the spine—until now ignored by rucksack designers. With this knowledge the First Light system was developed—a true internal frame. A contoured aluminium triangle—a very strong structure—loads the pelvis at the sacrum and distributes this load around the bone structure of the hips for efficient loading of the whole pelvic region. In short, the system directs the load straight into the carrier's legs without pulling on the shoulders, and so causes less strain and fatigue than other harness systems.

Hallmark. Hallmark has an affinity with the outdoors and the environment and for over 30 years has been producing high-performance adventure equipment that enables you to enjoy those special places. Hallmark purchased Fairydawn last year and hopes to draw on the two companies' combined knowledge and experience to produce better equipment, purpose-built for the 1990s.

Hallmark rucksacks are built for comfort. A harness that is easy to adjust lets you experience the perfect fit. A shaped hip-belt adjusts to hug your body. The internal frame is shaped to your back profile to support your back and give the pack rigidity. Dual-density foam gives the shoulder-pads unrivalled comfort even at the end of a long day. A concealed closed-cell-foam pad gives firm lumbar support while mesh and open-cell foam keep your lower back well ventilated.

JanSport. Since its beginnings in 1967 as a major designer and manufacturer of quality outdoor gear, the JanSport company has taken great pride in the continual field-testing and consequent improvement of its products. From family-camping trips into the wilderness to major expeditions to the world's highest peaks, JanSport has continued to meet the high standards that extreme conditions demand. JanSport is strongly motivated to produce the kind of dependable, functional equipment that is compatible with the requirements of wilderness travel. In short, JanSport produces products that measure up to its own demanding standards so you can be sure they'll measure up to yours. Over the last decade JanSport has sponsored many expeditions to various parts of the world. The most notable was the successful 1984 expedition to Mt Everest, on which Phil Ershler reached the summit by the North Col. Nineteen ninety-two is JanSport's 25th anniversary as a leading manufacturer of

Wild Gear Survey Rucksacks

	Claimed capacity, litres	Main material used	Sizes	Harness	Weight, kilograms	Manufacturer's description of guarantee	Compartments	Pockets	Approx. price, \$
Aiking Equipment Australia									
Base II	50-70	12-ounce canvas	2	Fixed	1.8	Lifetime	1	Top	249
McMillan	70-80	12-ounce canvas	2	Adjustable	1.9	Lifetime	1	Top, front	349
Streetch	80	12-ounce canvas	1	Adjustable	2.8	Lifetime	2	Top	385
Bergans Korea									
Aktic	65	Cordura	1	Adjustable	2.1	Five years	2	Top	229
Yei	75	Cordura	1	Adjustable	2.2	Five years	2	Top	239
Apogee	90-120	Cordura	1	Adjustable	2.4	Five years	2	Top	289
Berghaus UK/Korea									
Pulsar 85	85	Ardura 1000	1	Fixed	1.7	Lifetime	1	Top	189
Lady Pulsar	85	Ardura 1000	1	Fixed	1.9	Lifetime	2	Top, sides	199
Cyclops II Alp	65-75	Ardura 1000	4	Fixed	2.1	Lifetime	1	Top	379
Cyclops II Actec	60-70	Ardura 1000	4	Fixed	2.3	Lifetime	2	Top	399
Caribee Korea									
El Dorado 75	75	Cordura	1	Adjustable	2.2	Five years	2	Top, sides	175
DMH Trendsetter Korea									
Rio Grand	85	Korda	1	Adjustable	2.1	Five years	2	Top, sides	200
Fairydawn New Zealand									
Microl	65	12-ounce canvas	1	Adjustable	2.4	Natural life	2	Top, front	329
Wagler	60-70	12-ounce canvas	2	Adjustable	2.5	Natural life	1	Top, front	359
Endeavour	80-85	12-ounce canvas	2	Adjustable	2.8	Natural life	2	Top, front	365
First Light New Zealand									
Dominator	60	Canvas/cordura	1	Fixed	2.2	Five years	1	Front	229
Distance I & II	72-88	10-ounce canvas	2	Adjustable	2.4	Five years	1	Top, front	298
Distance S	80	10-ounce canvas	1	Adjustable	2.5	Five years	2	Top, front, side	349

UNIQUE IN CONSTRUCTION - LOADS BONE - NOT MUSCLE



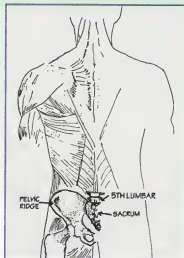
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First Light

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Very few present designs actually load the pelvis correctly. The First Light structural harness system with its floating hip belt structure, correctly loads the strongest load carrying part of the body, the 'sacrum' resulting in greater stability and freedom of movement with more comfort and less fatigue.

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So What??!



Terry Tremble on Mt McKinley, Alaska

People carrying *our* packs have got to the top of some of the highest mountains, too!

But the reality is that you want gear that is well designed, weather-proof, comfortable, well made and long-lasting.

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DOWN TO EARTH PRODUCTS

PS. Some retailers push only their house/private labels. Insist on trying OUTGEAR, and don't fall victim to high-profit, low-quality products.

Wild Gear Survey Rucksacks *continued*

	Claimed capacity, litres	Main material used	Size	Harness	Weight, kilograms	Manufacturer's description of guarantee	Compartments	Pockets	Approx. price, \$
Hallmark New Zealand									
Everest	65	12-ounce canvas	1	Adjustable	2.1	Natural life	2	Top, front	359
Traverse	80	12-ounce canvas	1	Adjustable	2.8	Natural life	1	Top, front	348
Phoenix	65	12-ounce canvas	2	Adjustable	2.4	Natural life	2	Top, front, sides	379
JenSport Korea									
Anaples	50-75	Cordura Plus	2	Adjustable	2.2	Limited lifetime	2	Top	225
Spire	50-70	Cordura Plus	3	Adjustable	2.0	Limited lifetime	2	Top	235
Karrimor UK/Korea									
Parther E55	60	Kodra	1	Adjustable	1.5	One year	2	Top	149
Parther E55	65	Kodra	1	Adjustable	1.6	One year	1	Top, sides	169
Jaguar S65	65	NS-100e	1	Adjustable	1.6	Lifetime	2	Top, sides	419
Condor 60/90	60-80	NS-100e	1	Adjustable	2.4	Lifetime	2	Top	559
Kathmandu Korea									
Sherpa	85	Cordura	1	Adjustable	2.1	Lifetime	1	Top	199
La Fuma France									
Nomade 80	80	Cordura	1	Adjustable	1.6	Three years	2	Top, sides	340
Urbain 70	70	Cordura	1	Adjustable	1.7	Three years	2	Top	345
Lowe Ireland									
Camo Tera II	70-90	Cordura	1	Adjustable	2.4	Life of product	2	Top	339
Thelid	78-100	Cordura	1	Adjustable	2.4	As above	1	Top	359
Patagonia	84-109	Cordura	1	Adjustable	2.6	As above	2	Top	389
Mogee New Zealand									
Ravine	75-80	Arlec canvas	2	Fixed	1.8	Life of product	1	Top, front	279
Esprit	55-60	Arlec canvas	2	Adjustable	2.1	As above	2	Top, front	349
Canyon	75-80	Arlec canvas	2	Adjustable	2.2	As above	1	Top, front	359
Cascade	80-85	Arlec canvas	2	Adjustable	2.4	As above	2	Top, front	395
Modern Explore Israel									
Yeti	55-85	Cordura	2	Adjustable	2.3	Lifetime	2	Top	310
Challenger	60-90	Cordura	2	Adjustable	2.5	Lifetime	2	Top, sides	345
Mountain Designs Korea									
Baskin II & III	60-70	1000-denier Tera	2	Adjustable	2.6	Lifetime	2	Top, front	299
Rongbuk II & III	60-70	1000-denier Tera	2	Adjustable	2.6	Lifetime	2	Top	339
Mouthsmith USA									
Backbone	60	Cordura	1	Fixed	2.3	Life of product	1	Top	419
Profile I	85	Cordura	1	Adjustable	2.3	As above	2	Top	465
Profile II	100	Cordura	1	Adjustable	2.4	As above	2	Top	510
Elite 5000	115	Cordura	1	Adjustable	3.2	As above	1	Top	695
Outgear Australia									
Mooring	50-70	12-ounce canvas	3	Fixed	1.8	Lifetime	1	Top, front	249
Potomac	50-70	12-ounce canvas	3	Fixed	1.9	Lifetime	2	Top, front	289
Bush Kakadu	65-85	12-ounce canvas	3	Adjustable	2.4	Lifetime	1	Top, front	349
Dartree	60-80	12-ounce canvas	3	Adjustable	2.4	Lifetime	2	Top, front	395
South Wind Australia									
Barrington	60-80	8-ounce core-spun canvas	4	Fixed	2.3	Lifetime	1	Top, front	345
Federation	60-80	As above	4	Fixed	2.5	Lifetime	2	Top, front	389
Tika New Zealand									
Rugby	65	12-ounce canvas	1	Adjustable	1.6	Five years	1	Top, front	299
Takiko	85	12-ounce canvas	1	Adjustable	2.0	Five years	1	Top, front	319
Cupid	65	12-ounce canvas	1	Adjustable	1.7	Five years	2	Top, front	319
Taranaki	80	12-ounce canvas	1	Adjustable	2.1	Five years	2	Top, front	349
White Mountain Korea									
Man Peak	75	Cordura	2	Adjustable	2.5	Five years	2	Top	249
Wilderness Equipment Australia									
Breakout	50-70	8-ounce core-spun canvas	4	Adjustable	2.2	Lifetime	1	Front	259
Expedition I	60-80	As above	4	Adjustable	2.5	Lifetime	1	Top, front	319
Expedition II	60-80	As above	4	Adjustable	2.7	Lifetime	2	Top, front	339

innovative and well-designed rucksacks of proven reliability.

Karrimor. Anatomy and physiology—the flesh and bones of load carrying. At the heart of good rucksack design is an understanding of anatomy and physiology and of the need to minimize restriction of the rucksack wearer during walking, climbing, skiing or any other dynamic activity. When engineering Karrimor back systems, our aim has been to maintain a correct and healthy posture: to retain the correct spinal curvature during activity and to prevent undue pressure on sensitive areas of muscle, nerve and bone, and thereby to ensure comfort and safety. At Karrimor we have been responsible for innovative improvements in design, fabrics and load-carrying technology for over 40 years.

Kathmandu. Kathmandu is a manufacturer and retailer of high-performance outdoor clothing and equipment with a factory in Christchurch, New Zealand, where many of its products are manufactured. Kathmandu aims to ensure high quality at reasonable prices. Its rucksacks are manufactured in Korea—a manufacturing Mecca these days for British and American outdoor-equipment companies. Kathmandu dictates the design and the supplies of materials or specifies the type of fabric, buckles, cordage, harness system and so on to specialized pack manufacturers, thus ensuring a high standard of quality control.

The 75 litre Sherpa pack is designed to be equally suitable for extended bushwalking or alpine use. It has a fully adjustable harness and a strong, aluminium-alloy internal frame. The main compartment is weather-proofed with an ample lid and draw-cord closures at both throat and mouth. There is a capacious lid pocket, a crampon patch, side pockets, side sleeves and straps for tent poles. The heavyweight Cordura is hard-wearing and water-resistant.

La Fuma. The La Fuma range of high-quality rucksacks and other camping equipment has been sold throughout Europe for over 56 years. Made in France, this brand is today one of the leaders in development, and pioneered the internal-frame system which continues to set the standard. La Fuma rucksacks are now available in Australia.

The range consists of four models ranging in capacity from 50 to 80 litres. The fabrics used are Du Pont Cordura and, to reinforce the base on all models, an abrasion-resistant PVC material called Taryl. The AB system, used for adjusting back-lengths on all models except the Super Guide 50/60, is efficient and comfortable; the shoulder straps and padded back have a cushioning effect, and air channels are built into the back. The four models have a variety of features such as removable hoods, drop-through partitions, side pockets which can be zipped away, loading through a zipped panel behind the shoulder-straps, and ski holders. They incorporate the latest design, styling and colours and should be a success on the Australian market.

Lowe. Lowe rucksacks were created by Jeff Lowe, one of the world's leading climbers, and his brother Greg, also a climber but with a flair for design and an engineering background that enabled him to move ideas

JANSPORT

ARAPILES RUCKSACKS

Two of the best



Arapiles 60, designed for the weekend bushwalker and ski tourer. Arapiles Expedition, built with extended trips in mind.

Both in Cordura, with many features:

- two compartments that can be converted to one
- two zipped pockets in the lid
- collar and detachable lid for extra capacity when you need it
- side compression straps
- wand pockets
- accessory straps
- ice-axe loop
- fixed hip-belt

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At Macpac, our task is simply to make every step of your outdoor adventures a trip in the Comfort Zone.



Macpac Cascade

The Macpac Dynamic Harness on the Cascade works as an anti-gravity device. The harness pivots at the base to move with your body and not against it. There are no pre-set limitations on how the pack should fit and feel. Because no other body is like yours, we make the Dynamic Harness infinitely adjustable.

It continues to define personalized comfort in packs.

A uniquely comfortable harness combined with sturdy components and strict attention to detail.

So you know your Macpac will deliver unrivalled performance... wherever tomorrow finds you.



from the drawing-board to practical and functional reality. Together they revolutionized rucksack design.

When the Lowe family first began climbing together in the Rocky Mountains of North America, they used ex-army equipment—as most people did at that time. Rucksacks had ungainly external frames, either H- or A-shaped, and the alternatives were simple, soft packs suitable for only the lightest of loads. Others put up with the limitations of their equipment but the Lowes were different—particularly Greg, who, with his own kind of genius, began to develop a unique load-carrying system. The result was a generation of rucksacks that set new standards in fit, adjustment and carrying comfort.

Macpac. From the time Macpac's founder Bruce McIntyre designed and made his first pack in a garage in Christchurch, New Zealand, Macpac has been dedicated to producing durable, comfortable, innovative outdoor equipment. With the introduction of the Dynamic and Lightning harnesses Macpac placed itself at the forefront of research and development in pack design, especially regarding the interaction between the pack and the wearer's anatomy. These harnesses replicate every movement the wearer makes, pivoting at the waist as the human body does in differing terrain. Because many of Macpac's staff and their friends are active mountaineers, skiers and bushwalkers, every innovation is tested before it leaves the design stage. Macpac's commitment to quality extends to a complete lifetime warranty for its products. Little wonder that for many, Macpac defines endurance and reliability.

Modan/Explore. Explore packs from Modan are new to Australia. They feature a revolutionary new harness design that enables retailers to ensure a precise fit on most customers. The design concept resulted from Modan's negotiations with the Israeli military, who wanted a harness that could be quickly and efficiently transferred from one user to another. The back-length of these packs can be adjusted while the pack is full and on the back. Exhaustive field-testing has proven that these packs are extremely well made. They are available in Cordura and the quality of stitching is impeccable.

The Yeti and the Challenger are both two-compartment packs for walkers although the Challenger has a zip-out front panel that gives easy access to gear—along the lines of a travel pack. The Challenger also features two fully collapsible side-pockets and a sleeping-bag compression system. All packs come in two back-lengths. The shoulder-straps, 'nape pad', hip-belt and frame distribute the load efficiently over the greatest possible load-carrying area while maintaining maximum body movement.

Mountain Designs. All Mountain Designs rucksacks are made of abrasion-resistant 1000-denier Terra cloth with tough no 10 YKK zippers, Nifco buckles, and 100 per cent Terylene webbing. Triple stitching, bound seams and extensive bar-tacking eliminate the possibility of fabric fraying and seam failure. External fittings such as stove-pockets, compression-straps and accessory patches are precisely detailed.

Comfort and stability are the two considerations for a perfect fit. The Wedgetail harness system has an adjustable internal frame that follows your spine, tapering downwards to put the load on your hips—not on your mind. A dual-density foam hip-belt and a contoured lumbar pad spread the weight evenly around your pelvis, leaving no pressure-points. Cut-away shoulder-straps are positioned to prevent chafing and a movable sternum-strap allows fine adjustment.

Mountainsmith. Almost all the research-and-development work at Mountainsmith takes place while Pat Smith, the company's founder and owner, rambles around the world's back country with his home on his back. (It's tough at the top!) He carries fabric, webbing, buckles, a pair of scissors and a stout industrial stapler, and builds prototypes in the field. It's the best way to get immediate feedback under precisely the conditions for which the gear is intended—a direct, efficient design and testing system.

The three packs surveyed have different harness systems and there are more models within each range. The Backbow fits like a second skin. Its lean profile allows lots of upper-body movement for skiing, climbing or walking. With its unique Omni belt system, built-in rope-loops and ski holsters, this is a no-frills, lightweight, technical pack. The Frostfire uses the Delta suspension system for precise fit and great adjustment. Frostfire 1 is smaller and features a slightly modified waist-belt to fit small women. The Elite 5000 is a versatile pack. The waist-belt on its Infinity suspension system tilts to spread the load evenly over the wearer's hips and lumbar region regardless of individual anatomy. The shoulder-straps are adjustable to allow for changes in clothing as well as variations in load.

South Wind. South Wind makes rucksacks in Australia for Australian conditions. By using durable materials ideally suited to Australian conditions, and by maintaining very stringent quality control, South Wind endeavours to produce gear that is quite simple but very strong. All the packs come in four back-lengths and are adjustable in shoulder-strap length, easy to use and very comfortable to carry.

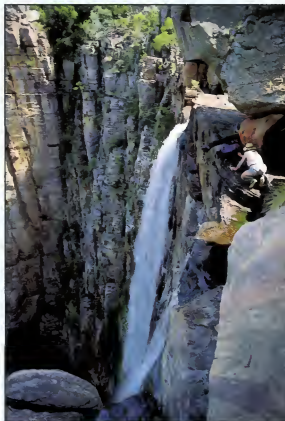
Tika. Whilst Tika may be a new name in packs in Australia, the company was established in Christchurch, New Zealand, 18 years ago. Since then Tika has established itself as a small, dedicated company whose cycle-touring equipment is renowned the world over for durability. During the last few years Tika has turned its attention to rucksack design. Many of the harness and construction details are the result of company owner Wayne Doran's experience as a safety systems technician for the Royal New Zealand Air Force. In this role Wayne scrutinized the likes of ejection seats and parachutes.

Tika packs are simple in construction and practical in design. Canvas is used and seams are kept to a minimum to enhance weather-resistance. Harnesses were designed in consultation with field testers and a medical physiologist to ensure that the carrying would be both comfortable and healthy for the wearer's back and hips. Gimmicks are avoided but useful features have been incorporated

into traditional designs. Therefore Tika packs are reasonably priced.

White Mountain. No information received.

Wilderness Equipment. 'In anything at all, perfection is finally attained not when there is no longer anything to add, but when there is no longer anything to take away.' Our range of packs continues to evolve after nine years of making and using them. We began with four sizes of fixed back-length, with inter-



Sometimes all the harness systems in the world just aren't going to help you. David Oslington taking his pack for an airy walk round the brink of Jim Jim Falls, Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory. *Andrew Cox*

changeable, adjustable harnesses, for each model, and we've stuck with them. It is interesting to see some of our competitors returning to this user-based concept after forays into the jungle of compromise where the adjustable-back-length pack flourishes. Besides introducing a degree of complication that invites failure, adjustable-length backs only partly solve the problem of fitting a wide range of heights and builds.

We have never stopped thinking of ways to build versatility into our packs. No matter what you do with your pack, anything that dangles or flaps is a liability. Careful design can reduce a nightmare of straps, fittings and adjustments to something deceptively simple—and none the worse for it. At Wilderness Equipment we make everything according to this premise. ■

Simon Head lives in Melbourne, where he manages a specialist outdoor equipment shop. He has skied and bushwalked extensively in south-eastern Australia and New Zealand.

For Comfort and Reliability



Walking GR 52 in the Mercantor National Park, France.

Photo: Arctic Camera

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Count on Jaguar

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Comfort—through the unique S.A. (self-adjustment) back system which adjusts to suit your individual back length. Adjustable on your back and on the mover, allowing constant redistribution of the load between shoulders and hips, relieving tired muscles.

Comfort—through designs tailored to fit men and women.

Comfort—through the use of soft-feel "body contact fabrics" in all areas which may touch the body.



Jaguar GR 65

Reliability—through the unique Karrimor specification KS-100e and KS-100t nylon fabrics. The benchmarks in waterproof rucksac fabrics. Hard on abrasion and treated to resist stains.

Reliability—through the care taken in over-binding every major seam and double-reinforcing every rucksac base.

Reliability—backed by Goldstar & Lifetime guarantees.

Jaguars are available in three series: Jaguar S, Jaguar L (designed for women) and Jaguar GR. Available with and without side pockets over a range of sizes from 54–80 litres.



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ALTIMETERS

Getting high in measurable increments—a *Wild* survey

Excuse me, do you have the altitude?

Have you thought about using an altimeter when travelling in the mountains? The following review describes some uses for an altimeter and compares the different types available.

Navigation. It is tempting to write off the use of an altimeter in Australia as a waste of time. However, the information an altimeter provides can make the difference between another navigational triumph and a severe case of geographical embarrassment.

Your party may, for example, be descending along a ridgetop in poor visibility, looking for a subsidiary spur down which to ski (or walk) to safety. The trouble is that you cannot accurately measure how far down the ridge you have come. Your compass certainly won't tell you. Consequently, you might have no way of knowing which of the numerous subsidiary spurs you pass is the one that you have selected from the map—and the wrong one could lead you deep into a dank gully or to the top of a nasty cliff!

Fortunately, your altimeter is at hand, calibrated and ready, and a quick glance at it reveals that a small spur snaking off the main ridge into the mist begins at the right altitude as shown by the contours on your map. Phew! It looked just like all the others.

In good weather, navigation with a map and a compass usually poses few problems for experienced wilderness travellers. In foul weather and bad visibility, the additional information supplied by an altimeter can be very handy.

Reading the weather. How many times have you crawled into your sleeping bag not long after a reassuring red sunset, with high hopes for a bright, sunny day tomorrow to carve up those elusive powdery bowls? Come morning, nature calls far too early and you stagger out of the snow cave, cursing that last cup of tea the night before, into a murky world. Is there a storm on the way, or is this just a light morning fog?

A quick glance at your altimeter all but answers the question: the barometric pressure has risen by ten millibars overnight. After a hasty breakfast, you ski off up the mountain and emerge from the valley fog into brilliant sunshine on the summit. From your lofty vantage point, the altimeter's prediction of good weather is confirmed.

Mountaineering. Altimeters are indispensable in high or more extreme alpine environments. Mountaineers use altimeters to help them to locate passes and high-altitude camps as well as for general navigation. They are invaluable for charting progress on featureless glaciers, and even for confirming that the high point you have reached is the desired summit. They are useful as barometers, too: a large drop in barometric pressure overnight may prompt a strategic retreat instead of a summit bid.



'The wrong spur could lead you to the top of a nasty cliff!' On Lions Head, above the descent route from Frenchmans Cap, Tasmania. *Stephen Down collection*

Using an altimeter. The key to using an altimeter successfully is to keep it calibrated. Altimeters measure air pressure and convert this to an indirect measure of altitude. The higher the altitude, the lower the air pressure. However, when air pressure changes due to changing weather patterns (the movement of high- and low-pressure systems), the altitude indicated by the altimeter will change correspondingly even when you remain in the same place.

To keep an altimeter measuring correctly, you should periodically check its reading when at a terrain feature of known altitude. If the reading differs from the actual height (obtained from a map or guidebook), general barometric pressure has changed, and you should recalibrate the altimeter by setting it to the correct altitude at your reference point. Regular checks of your altimeter's calibration serve a valuable secondary purpose, too: they give you an idea of the variation in general barometric pressure through the day.

Most altimeters include a barometric scale which measures atmospheric pressure in millibars. On analogue models this is usually a separate scale on the dial; on digital ones, a



The Explore series packs by Modan combine a "V" frame with a unique, fully adjustable harness system, which allows instant adjustment even while wearing the pack.

EXPLORE

by modan



The Yeti is a slim alpine-style double-compartment pack. There are two sizes, both adjustable in volume: 55-70 litre and 65-85 litre.



The Trip is a convertible travel pack—now it's a suitcase, now it's a rucksack. The single-compartment main pack comes in two sizes—45 and 60 litres—both with zip-off 18 litre day pack.

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A complete meal for two—Creamy Broccoli Soup, Herb and Onion Dip with Sesame Breadsticks, Leonardo da Vinci's meal, Chocolate Fondue with Strawberries, and a candle—in a stuff sack.
SATURDAY NIGHT ON THE TRAIL
455 grams



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AlpineAire quality meals are so complete, many can be prepared in their own pouches. They are free of preservatives, MSG, artificial flavours and colours. AlpineAire's inherent good taste results from an innovative approach to outdoor cuisine. Most AlpineAire products are freeze-dried. This process retains more nutrients and creates a lightweight, shelf-stable product as close as possible to its fresh and natural taste.

Unlike other recreational food products, our generous serving sizes are realistically gauged to the expectation of hungry adventurers. They are easy to prepare with nearly any heat source, and many can be eaten as is or require only the addition of hot water; when cooking is necessary, it is only for a few minutes. Vacuum packed and nitrogen flushed to maintain freshness, AlpineAire foods will endure the most extreme conditions—from lush jungles to fog-shrouded peaks.

New Expanded Range — Now there are 32 different varieties

Breakfasts

Strawberry Honey Granola and Milk

Strawberries star in this granola with oats, almonds, sunflower seeds, honey and milk

Pure Maple Syrup

Top pancakes or cereal with this pure granulated syrup

Soups

Multi Bean Soup

Pinto and white beans, lentils, peas, carrots, onions and spices combine in this high-protein soup

Creamy Potato Cheddar Soup

A hearty and nutritious soup with potatoes, cheddar cheese, red bell peppers and green onions

Fruit

Real Apple-Blueberry Fruit Cobbler

Blueberries give this apple cobbler a new twist. With stone-ground whole wheat flour, eggs, milk, honey, dates and cinnamon

Blueberries and Strawberries Whole and freeze-dried

Meals

Cheese Nut Casserole

A delicious blend of pasta, rice, cashews and almonds with cheddar cheese

Mushroom Pilaf with Vegetables

A Middle Eastern recipe with mushrooms, carrots, peas and bell peppers

Shrimp Newburg

Shrimp, pasta and vegetables in a delicate dill sauce

Tuna with Noodles and Cheese

Scrumptious! Tuna with noodles, cheddar cheese and peas

Ingredients

Cooked Brown Rice, Diced Tomatoes, Sweet Bell Pepper Combo, Onions, Tomato Powder, Uncloured Cheddar Cheese Powder

Use these ingredients to prep up your own recipe!

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more convenient, separate function. Use this to record the pressure at regular intervals over a period at the same location. You are not interested in the pressure reading itself, only in changes in pressure in either direction. An increase in barometric pressure may signal the approach of a high-pressure system and good weather; a decrease may indicate the approach of a low, and possible storms.

Note that the barometric pressures in the mountains will be considerably lower than those marked on the isobar maps issued with meteorological forecasts since the pressures marked on the weather map are those at sea level.

You can use an altimeter even without a barometric scale to measure changes in barometric pressure indirectly by observing changes in measured altitude at a fixed location. For example, if the altitude measured increases, barometric pressure is decreasing, and vice versa.

Digital versus analogue. Technology is ready to ambush you at every corner. The traditional analogue altimeter has a round dial with a rotating needle. A full circuit of the needle measures 1000 metres and a secondary dial displays the thousands. Altimeters of this type are simple to use but can be difficult to read at a glance.

Digital altimeters give you a numeric liquid-crystal display (like that of a calculator) of the height in metres, and consequently are easier to read. Those built into a wrist-watch are less trouble to carry and are always accessible. Buttons calibrate the altimeter and control its functions, so you need to learn how to use them. This is no harder than to master the intricacies of a digital watch but is more difficult than using an altimeter of the analogue variety.

The digital altimeters used by hang-glider pilots may also contain a variometer, an instrument that measures the rate of change of altitude and may give an audible signal in some situations. This feature is not of great use to bushwalkers or ski tourers—except to those who fall off cliffs, perhaps. Of course, digital altimeters require batteries and will stop working when they flatten. You should therefore carry a spare battery on extended expeditions.

Peter Campbell

TENTS

Celestial

The *Macpac Celeste* from New Zealand is a new, lightweight, two-pole tunnel tent for two people. It has two vestibules and a seam-sealed, tub-style floor, and can be pitched fly first, inner first, or with fly and inner together. The *Celeste* weighs 3.1 kilograms and costs RRP \$598.

RUCKSACKS

Marsupial

If you read with interest the survey of child carriers in *Equipment*, *Wild* no 45, read on. *Macpac* has produced a carrier for children from six months to four years old—and 'strong enough to carry bigger kids if you have the stamina'—which incorporates a 25 litre space for gear, and D-rings to which additional pockets can be attached. The *Possum* has the same adjustable harness as several of *Macpac's* rucksack models and is capable of standing alone. RRP \$248. A birthday present from your partner carrying the pack?

Marsupial II

Billy is the name of a new 40 litre pack from *Aiking Equipment*—a big day-pack or, as several manufacturers of such packs prefer to say, a day-and-a-half pack. Available in either 12-ounce canvas or 1000-denier Cordura, it has a top pocket, two loops for ice tools, attachment points for crampons, and compression straps. A removable closed-cell-foam pad slips into a sleeve inside the pack. RRP \$140. Aiking's *Tiari Giumut* is a smaller day-pack in a zipped, tear-drop style, made of eight-ounce canvas hand-printed with an Aboriginal design. RRP \$69.

SLEEPING BAGS AND ACCESSORIES

In the yellow corner

Gold-Eck sleeping bags from Austria are filled with GLT, a new polyester insulating material for which its makers claim dry-weather properties closer to those of down than any other synthetic filling and all the advantages of synthetics when wet—namely, that GLT does not absorb water and retains all but 15

per cent of its insulating power when wet through. A light layer of 'Thermoflect' scrim within the bag is said to increase heat retention by 11 per cent while allowing moisture vapour to escape. We've seen two models: the *Husky 850* is a very light, mummy-shaped bag with a single layer of GLT insulation throughout and a second layer at the foot; the *Husky 1000*, also mummy-shaped, has one layer of GLT below and two on top and at the foot; a shaped hood; an insulating collar at the shoulders; and a more substantial draught flap along the zip than the *Husky 850*. They weigh 800 and 1300 grams, respectively, and sell for RRP \$198 and \$269 at *Interrek* shops. Three further models range up to 'expedition' warmth, 2.1 kilograms, and RRP \$449.

Macbag

Recent refinements to the *Macpac* range of sleeping bags from New Zealand include extra width at the shoulders for greater comfort and, on mummy-shaped bags, waterproof/breathable Reflex material covering a section at the foot. Also new is the *Mosquito* model, one of three *Macpac* bags with the down all on top and a sleeve beneath for a sleeping mat. The *Mosquito* has 300 grams of down and weighs 800 grams in total. RRP \$265.

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

Raining in the desert

The *Tanami Barcoo* is a new, mid-high-length Gore-Tex jacket for general use. It has two cargo pockets protected by sewn-down flaps, a waist draw-cord adjusted from the outside, and closes with a zipper protected by a wide double flap secured by snap fasteners. A jacket in size medium weighs 560 grams. The *Barcoo* is the first new garment to come to us bearing the Gore 'Guaranteed To Keep You Dry' label and 'rucksack sports icon' advertised in this and the past two issues of *Wild*. This ambitious new guarantee, based on pre-production testing, already appears to be a standard feature of Gore-Tex garments made by Australia's major specialist outdoor-clothing manufacturers. At RRP \$249—less expensive than many more elaborately designed Gore-Tex jackets—the *Barcoo* may well prove attractive. *Tanami* clothing is available from *Paddy Pallin* shops.

Ever so casual

Paddy Pallin Integral Casuals are long and short pants for men and women. Like the more elaborate Travelwear pants, *Casuals* are made of lightweight, quick-drying Exodur polyester-cotton fabric, but have fewer pockets and weigh even less. Long *Casual* Pants (men's and women's) sell for RRP \$79.95 and *Casual Shorts* for \$59.95 at *Paddy Pallin* shops.

Folded flat

A range of underwear made by *Duofold* in the USA is now available in Australia. There are various styles—tops with long and short sleeves, and long pants—for men and women, made of machine-washable DuPont *Thermax* fabric and of heavier blends of *Thermax*, polyester and wool. All garments feature flat seams. Prices range from around \$35 to \$95. Imported by *Grant Minervini Agencies*.

Wild Equipment Survey Altimeters

	Type	Maximum altitude, metres	Accuracy, metres	Dial scale	Altitude alarm	Altitude memory	Approx. price, \$
<i>Airesse</i> Switzerland <i>Alto</i>	D	8000	±2	Yes	No	Optional	695
<i>Casio</i> Japan <i>Altregh</i>	DW	4000	±10	Yes	Yes	Max only	199
<i>Citizen</i> Japan <i>Altregh</i>	DW	5000	±10	No	Yes	Yes	750
<i>Thommen</i> Switzerland 6000	A	6000	±10	No	No	No	450
9000	A	9000	±10	No	No	No	550
<i>YCM</i> Japan	A	5000	±20	No	No	No	80
A analogue D digital DW digital watch							

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JANSPORT

Sundrop and Teardrop

- Ideally sized
- Loaded with features

The Sundrop day-and-a-half pack and the smaller Teardrop can be used in just about any situation. Made of 420 denier heavy-duty Trylon® with a 600 denier base, they're ideally suited to day walking and cross-country skiing and robust enough for rockclimbing. Select the one that suits the size of **your** load!

SUNDROP for convenient access and streamlined style.

CAPACITY: 35 litres

FABRIC: 420 denier heavy-duty Trylon® with 600 denier base

COLOURS: Red, blue, purple or teal

WEIGHT: 1 kilogram

FEATURES:

- Double-layered fabrics on base for additional strength
- No 10 YKK zip
- Four side compression-straps
- Base carrying-straps
- Padded back
- Sternum strap
- Dual ice-axe loops

TEARDROP is a smaller version with most of the same features.

CAPACITY: 24 litres

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Nouvelles chaussures de randonnée

The French ski-boot manufacturer *Salomon* took the downhill ski world by storm during the late 1970s when it introduced the first widely accepted 'rear-entry' downhill ski boots. Salomon Nordic System boots and bindings subsequently had a great impact on the world of lightweight Nordic skiing and helped to spawn the competing New Nordic Norm system. Now Salomon has tackled the walking boot market in a similar fashion with a new range. Models for more extreme pursuits have hinged, plastic ankle collars and an internal lace-up wrap which, Salomon claims, holds the foot comfortably in place within the boot. The *Authentic 7* has neither of these features but shares the *Clima-Tex* microporous inner membrane and the upper of treated leather and Cordura that Salomon says solve 'external moisture problems'. The styling is unusual for a walking boot—it is certainly *très Française*, and the term 'street-wise' springs to mind—and a pair in size 7½ weighs 1.5 kilograms. RRP \$280. Other models range in price from RRP \$149 to \$399. Distributed by *Bursill Sportsgear*. The good news on the environmental front is that we are

told that all Salomon stationery, boxes and plastic packaging use recycled materials and environmentally friendly inks.

MISCELLANEOUS

Assistance package

To a 'lay observer' of the mysteries of first aid, the *Adventure First Aid Kit* jointly produced and sold by *St John Ambulance Australia* and *Paddy Pallin* looks like the most convincing



attempt yet to produce and distribute widely a kit suitable for emergencies affecting small, self-sufficient groups in the bush. Its contents are those of the *St John* general purpose kit with the addition of a whistle; a lightweight, metal-foil emergency blanket; an accident report form; four antiseptic tissues for wound preparation; and a ten centimetre heavy crepe bandage which replaces a smaller bandage from the general purpose kit. The concise *Guide to First Aid* included is laminated in plastic for durability, especially in wet conditions, and is easily accessible. The most visible feature of the new kit is a bright yellow, flexible, reinforced PVC pouch, which folds out to display its contents in four clear plastic



The new *Adventure First Aid Kit* from *St John Ambulance* and *Paddy Pallin* displays its wares in clear plastic pockets. **Left**, the genuine article? *Salomon Authentic 7* walking boot.

pockets and is printed with a list of contents, information on hypothermia and a series of emergency telephone numbers.

Some people may find this kit too big (it measures 18 x 16 x 10 centimetres and weighs 700 grams) but such a view might be hard to justify: what to omit, and why? Others will wish to add to it; the pouch is designed to accommodate a few extra items. A trip to a pharmacy should quickly dispel any misgivings at the price tag of RRP \$69.95. The next question after deciding to buy a first aid kit—or assemble your own—should be: do I know how to use it?

Letter from New Zealand

Mountain Recreation of Wanaka, New Zealand, has resumed production of *waterproof field-books*—lined, 40-page notebooks for use whenever it is necessary to make written records in the wet. Search and rescue, avalanche safety, biological field work and, games of hang-the-butcher in a leaky tent are a few obvious applications. Special pens are not required. By mail-order from *Mountain Recreation* for \$NZ12.50, or from outdoor gear shops. ■

New products (on loan to *Wild*) and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

TRIX

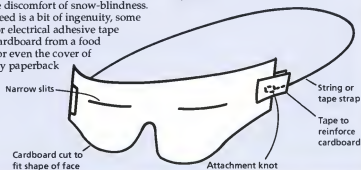
Eskimo goggles

A low-tech solution to a potentially painful situation, by *Stephen Bunton*

What are you to do? You have made your best snow-glasses totally inoperative with a spectacular skiing prang or a cart-wheeling fall while ice-climbing. Or, worse still, the first snow of the season has arrived during an autumn bushwalk and you have no sun-glasses. The answer is to rely on old technology and fashion yourself a pair of Eskimo goggles. The Eskimos used sealskin masks to protect their faces from cold. These masks also featured narrow slits across the eyes, which shielded out glare and prevented snow-blindness. This principle works remarkably well. We use it involuntarily when we squint in bright sunlight. It can be demonstrated by looking at a glary scene through a narrow gap between your fingers—with remarkable comfort. Similarly, it is easy to manufacture a pair of makeshift eye covers which will last the day and avert the otherwise inevitable discomfort of snow-blindness. All you need is a bit of ingenuity, some medical or electrical adhesive tape and the cardboard from a food packet—or even the cover of that trashy paperback

you brought as reading material. The trick is to use narrow slits, not wide slits. The slits should open up to a useful size as the goggles contour over your face. Make the slits about 2–3 centimetres long—approximately the extent of your field of view. You can always lengthen them if they should be too small; it is not so easy to close the aperture if you made it too big although more tape will help. What your emergency snow-goggles look like will depend very much on the materials you have available. Just remember the general principle involved. It could save you from a painful evening rubbing imaginary sand from your eyes. These excruciating symptoms begin six to eight hours after over-exposure to ultraviolet light.

Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section. Send your ideas to the address at the end of this department.



Sponsorship and supply for many unique adventures has resulted in Mountain Designs sleeping bags being chosen for high altitude mountaineering on Himalayan giants, Arctic ice walks and Antarctic explorations.

Our Mountain Series utilises all the experience gained in equipping high altitude mountaineers since 1974. The features of the Mountain Series Verglass: ☐ Box wall knitted mesh baffles – they will not fray or unravel. ☐ Sewn cross-block baffles – to prevent down movement from panel to panel ☐ Priority panelling at the chest – down density where you need it most. ☐ Differentially cut box foot – to allow the down to loft unrestricted around your feet ☐ Couling hood – to keep your head warm without restriction ☐ Chest muff – to help keep the warm air inside ☐ Twin 3-dimensional draught tubes – ultimate insulation for the zip ☐ Our internal zip guard – the lightest way to prevent the zip from snagging ☐ Left and right hand zips – 2 bags will zip together ☐ Milair outer shell – helps keep the down dry, dams warm air in and adds extra warmth without a significant weight increase.

Rest assured that whether you're bedding down on an ice-encrusted rock ledge, a youth hostel bunk, a bush hut, a tent, a snow cave or simply Grandma's lounge room floor, Mountain Designs' high loft down-filled sleeping bags have been going there and doing that since 1974.

Our range consists of:-

- ☐ The IceLine Series for general camping and travelling - 4 models
- ☐ The Patagonia Series for bushwalking and ski touring - 10 models
- ☐ The Travelite Series for backpack travel and bike touring - 3 models
- ☐ The Mountain Series for ski touring and low altitude mountaineering - 5 models
- ☐ The Expedition 8000mtr. Series for major Himalayan assaults.

We have unequalled credentials for sleeping bag manufacture

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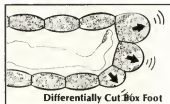
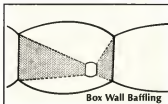
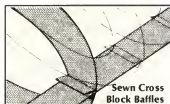
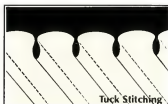


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FIRE!

Major work shot down in flames

Burning Bush: A Fire History of Australia

by Stephen Pyne (Allen & Unwin, 1991, RRP \$19.95).

Fire has had a major impact on Australian flora and fauna as well as on the Australian psyche. Stephen Pyne's book explores this idea.

Pyne is from the USA and is able to compare the effects of fire in Australia with those in other countries. Megafaunal extinctions and the present-day landscape in Australia owe an enormous amount to the widespread effects of fire, and the same cannot be said of any other continent. The impact of fire in Australia is unique, largely because of the presence of plants able to exploit the environmental niche created by fire.

Pyne has a florid style. Metaphors abound. There are oracular burning bushes, flaming swords guarding the gates of Eden, rings of fire, torches handed on, ashes to ashes, holocausts, crucibles—every event seems to be symbolic, until the whole thing becomes tedious in its intensity.

At the same time, the thought behind the writing is often woolly. To take one random example (from page 105): '[Fire] bridged the mental world with the material. It made possible a cognitive corroboree of Aboriginal culture.' What is this supposed to mean?

Often the statements are indefensibly sweeping:

Humans brought chronic fire, inextinguishable fire, they were a uniquely fire creature for whom fire was a universal tool. They all—Aborigines, Europeans, Australians—applied it universally in every conceivable landscape and for every conceivable purpose. (page xi)

Poetic though such broad assertions might appear, how could they be true? As Pyne himself points out, Aborigines did not in fact systematically burn alpine grasslands, to name one landscape that falls outside the universal sweep.

Factual errors are numerous and sometimes startling, and betray the fact that Pyne is not familiar with the country about which he writes. Malcolm Fraser is referred to as 'premier', and there is confusion about the federal system, as seen in this excerpt:

One by one the states legislated a galaxy of new parks into existence, created a National Parks and Wildlife Service (1967), and officially backed environmental planning. Further legislation in 1974 strengthened the [conservation] movement. (page 372)

We are not told what this further legislation was, nor whether it was federal or State, nor which State. It is surprising that material of this kind survived editing.



Alpine herbfield. Photo by Janusz Molinski, from the exhibition titled Australia's Natural Wonders.

Undoubtedly Aboriginal hunting practices involved the use of fire and had an impact on the landscape. The hard—and interesting—question is: how much impact? Pyne shies away from this. A considerable body of scientific material has charted the frequency of fire over thousands of years by analysing pollen and tree rings. Pyne does not record that studies now show a significant fire frequency even before Aboriginal people lived in Australia.

Another important question is the worth or otherwise of fuel-reduction burning in various Australian vegetation communities. That in many areas such burning has the effect of promoting fire-prone species and leads to more fires, as Pyne documents, is beyond dispute, but does he consider fuel-reduction burning is good, or bad? Pyne seems to think that nobody else has come to grips with this question, but he does not give us his own solution.

It is difficult to know just what thesis Pyne seeks to establish. Much of the book is simply repetition or a rambling chronicle of events, and the point of it all is elusive.

Burning Bush is troubling: it has a style in which everything seems to be either a paradox or a paradigm; and it is likely to be used as an

authoritative text without having the reliability necessary in such a work. Pyne does not present this as a modest book. He may have reached for the forbidden fire of academic and literary excellence, but he has merely burnt his fingers.

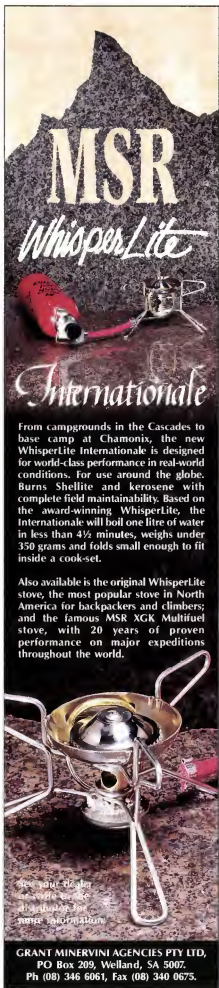
Brian Walters

Australia's Natural Wonders

Landscape and environment photography exhibition presented by the Environment Defenders Office, at 101 Collins St, Melbourne, Vic 3000, 20–31 May 1992.

Twelve leading Australian landscape and environment photographers, including four well known to *Wild* readers (Richard Bennett, Ern Mainka, Janusz Molinski and Richard Thwaites), were invited to show a total of 86 colour prints at this exhibition in support of the EDO. With outstanding wilderness photographers such as Bill Bachman, Peter Dombrovskis, Harry Nankin, Paul Sinclair and David Tatnall not included, one can only wonder at the selection criteria. Despite this, the exhibition was the most significant and spectacular of its type that I've seen.

With prints of up to three metres wide, the technical quality of the photography was generally staggering. Much of the credit for this must go to Bond Colour Laboratories, one of the sponsors, which printed all the photos exhibited.



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Because of the organizers' attempts to include 'popular' photographers, there were some non-wilderness scenes, among them photos of farm land and ocean yachting. Northern and central Australia predictably got a hammering, as did Antarctica. However, the overall quality of the exhibition was remarkable. Photos such as Neil McLeod's Arnhem Land escarpment, Janusz Molinski's Alpine herbfield and Jocelyn Burt's Kimberley moonrise are not easily forgotten.

It's a great pity that so few *Wild* readers will have had a chance to see such a major exhibition. It may be worth contacting the EDO to try to persuade it to take the exhibition elsewhere; or to become a member of this most worthwhile organization: phone (03) 600 1433.

Chris Baxter

Trekking in the Patagonian Andes

by Clem Lindenmayer (Lonely Planet, 1992, RRP \$17.95).

I remember looking at some maps of New Zealand's Southern Alps and remarking to a friend that a bushwalker would need a whole lifetime to explore those mountains fully. South America's Andes are on a vastly larger scale: it would take several lifetimes to scratch the surface of even a part of the Andes such as Patagonia.

In the past it has been difficult for visitors to get up-to-date information on possible walking trips in Patagonia. A few years back our small group relied mainly on friends and acquaintances who had been there for information about places to walk. On receiving this guidebook I turned immediately to places I had visited. Our first walk had begun in the Chilean town of Coyhaique. Before the walk one of our party had bumped into a local resident named Peter Hartmann. He was the president of the regional alpine club and after our walk he invited us to camp in his small backyard, in a special section between the vegetables and the fruit trees that he had reserved for visitors and their tents. It was therefore pleasing, on turning to the section in this guidebook on Coyhaique, to see there: 'Contact Peter Hartmann.'

This new book provides a very good starting point for those wanting to walk in Patagonia. No guidebook to such a large area could claim to be comprehensive, but this book describes 28 walks in a fair amount of detail and suggests many more possibilities. It is compact and could easily be carried in the pack of the weight-conscious traveller. Most of the information is thoroughly up to date; this is very important especially with transport to the more remote places. About a third of the book consists of useful general information: seasonal weather conditions; places to obtain maps; a good list of further reading; and a section of Spanish phrases and words of particular importance to the walker—such as 'Can I put up my tent here?'—that are not covered in conventional phrase-books. The food section includes some delicacies not found in Australian supermarkets, such as *dulce de leche*, which make excellent walking fuel.

The remaining two-thirds of the book contain information about particular areas and detailed walk descriptions. The better-known spots, such as the Lakes District in the

north, and the spectacular FitzRoy-Cerro Torre mountain group in Argentina and Chile's Torres del Paine, in the south, are covered as well as lesser known but equally good walks elsewhere, such as near Cerro Castillo in central Patagonia, and in Tierra del Fuego. There is information regarding access, including public transport details, to all

as South-west Cape and the spectacular chain of peaks leading east from Precipitous Bluff. The Eastern Arthur Range is excluded, which is a pity as the Eastern Arthurs (and especially Federation Peak) are visible from several points on the South Coast Track. Features of interest to walkers, such as campsites, are clearly marked.



Overlooking Osmiridium Beach from South-west Tasmania's South Coast Track—covered by the new South Coast Walks map. Chris Baxter

walks. The best—that is, cheapest—places to buy food are noted, as are the topographic maps appropriate to each district. Maps can be very hard to get in Chile and Argentina outside capital cities. Those provided in this guide, at scales between 1:100 000 and about 1:300 000, are generally adequate but should be supplemented with topographic maps if possible. The scale of the map of the *Parque Nacional Nahuel Huapi* has been left off—an accident?

Patagonia is one of the world's great wilderness areas. If you like walking in South-west Tasmania and New Zealand's South Island, you would certainly like Patagonia. Prices of food, transport and accommodation are generally low (liquor is so cheap that it can be difficult to remain sober), and the local people are interesting and friendly. This guidebook is both an inspiring source of ideas for new places to visit and a treasury of useful information. Strongly recommended.

David Noble

South Coast Walks

(Tasmap, 1992, RRP \$7.95).

Any walk of the South Coast Track in Tasmania used to involve carrying a series of maps, but Tasmap has now combined them into one convenient map at a scale of 1:100 000. It will be the standard map for walkers on the south coast from now on.

The map incorporates the whole of the Port Davey Track and the South Coast Track as well

The notes accompanying the map are detailed, but the choice of a pale type on a pale background makes them difficult to read. Most walkers will still wish to use a guidebook to supplement the new map.

BW

Birds of the Night

by David Hollands (Reed Books, 1991, RRP \$49.95).

To photograph birds is one thing. To photograph them at night while perched 30 metres up an unsteady tree, constantly alert for the one visit the bird may make to its nest, and with an outside chance of having one's head raked by angry talons, is quite another.

Yet, with the help of an extraordinary bushman, John Young, David Hollands has managed to photograph every species of owl, frogmouth and nightjar in Australia, and has learned a great deal about them in the process.

The photographic highlights of his six-year quest are presented in this book along with detailed and often exciting accounts of how each picture was won. The writing ranks alongside the best of Australian bush literature; the collection of photographs is without parallel.

Stephen Garnett

Australian Snakes: a Natural History

by Rick Shine (Reed Books, 1991, RRP \$29.95).

This is the best book about snakes that I have ever read. Rick Shine, one of Australia's leading herpetologists, has written a book that is both easy to read and scientifically accurate. It is also imbued with affection for his animals and with the sort of droll humour that is

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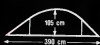
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Weight of tent complete: 4.9 kg



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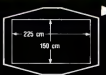
Inner Tent
Height: 100 cm
Length: 212 cm
Width: 117 cm
Weight of tent complete: 2.2 kg

MICRO 3

Inner Tent
Height: 100 cm
Length: 215 cm
Width: 120 cm
Weight of tent complete: 2.8 kg

MICRO 4

Inner Tent
Height: 110 cm
Length: 225 cm
Width: 150 cm
Weight of tent complete: 3.9 kg



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REVIEWS

typical of herpetologists but all too rare in natural history books.

This book is not about identifying snakes but about how they live their lives. From it one can get a real idea of what it means to be linear, legless, scaly and cold-blooded. It combines the latest scientific research, much of it conducted by Shine and his students, with a string of pertinent anecdotes that make the book both accessible and memorable. Everybody likes a good snake yarn and Shine has a lifetime's collection.

The photography in the book is not only spectacular and creative but also useful rather than merely decorative. I particularly enjoyed the 'rat's-eye' frontal views of snakes' heads and the cluster of confused herpetologists seeking snakes on a rocky hillside.

SG

A Fresh Approach to Knotting and Ropework

by Charles Warner (published by the author, 1992, RRP \$9.95).

I had no idea there was so much to know about knots until I saw Charles Warner's latest book.

Knots are important in many outdoor activities—for adjusting guys on a tent, for tying a rope on to a harness when climbing, even for constructing an emergency stretcher. Often knots are tied because 'that's the way it's done' and not because of any genuine appreciation of the reasons why a particular knot should or should not be used.

Knotting and Ropework arranges different types of knots in a logical order, and systematically so that common features can be seen. There are clear diagrams of many hundreds of knots, and their particular uses are set out. A thorough 'summary of applications' will enable you to find the knot you need for a given task.

BW

Other titles received

Canada-A Travel Survival Kit

by Mark Lightbody and Tom Smallman (Lonely Planet, fourth edition 1992, RRP \$27.95).

Central America on a Shoestring

by Nancy Keller, Tom Brosnahan and Rob Rachowiecki (Lonely Planet, 1992, RRP \$22.95).

Eastern Europe Phrasebook

(Lonely Planet, 1992, RRP \$8.95).

Hong Kong, Macau & Canton-A Travel Survival Kit

by Robert Storey (Lonely Planet, sixth edition 1992, RRP \$19.95).

Morocco, Algeria & Tunisia-A Travel Survival Kit

by Geoff Crowther and Hugh Finlay (Lonely Planet, second edition 1992, RRP \$22.95).

North-East Asia on a Shoestring

by Robert Storey, Geoff Crowther, Choe Hyung Pun, Joe Cummings, Robert Strauss, Chris Taylor and Tony Wheeler (Lonely Planet, third edition 1992, RRP \$21.95).

Recycling Our Future

by Brett Charles (Allen & Unwin, 1992, RRP \$14.95). ■

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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SKI TRAIL FEES

Bureaucrats receive a caning

I was pleased to read, in *Wild* no 44, your questioning of Victoria's Alpine Resorts Commission's trail fees. Trail fees are indeed 'highway robbery'. I, for one, miss the days when you could ski Mt Stirling in its natural state. I myself have questioned the legality of trail fees being imposed on cross-country skiers who pass through ARC Nordic areas whilst *en route* to places where the snow still lies natural and untouched... It is a concern to me that the ARC is increasingly becoming a law unto itself.

Philip Bentley, the chief executive officer of the ARC, in reply to a letter from me, stated the following reasons for the continuation of trail fees: such fees exist in America and Europe; and the increasing number of skiers and their level of acceptance justifies the ARC's fees.

If you want to ski on groomed trails all day, you should probably have to contribute to the trails' maintenance, but if you're only passing through ARC Nordic areas, *en route* to more remote, or untrailed areas, why should you have to pay? Those of us who sometimes need to pass through ARC-controlled areas to gain access to more remote places should stand up and be counted...

If you live in Victoria, the best way to be counted is to write to your local Member of Parliament, the Premier, the Leader of the State Opposition and, of course, to Philip Bentley...

Kent Scott
Shepparton, Vic

Withdrawal symptoms

I am a long-time reader of your publication and as such would like to voice my opinion on a matter which concerns me deeply.

In recent years, we have all become more aware of the increasing importance of protecting and preserving our fragile environment. The time has come to place more emphasis on using renewable resources and recycling all possible products. The use of recycled, non-chlorine-bleached paper in print media would promote huge savings in resources. It is possible, as can be seen with such publications as *Simply Living*.

We must all take responsibility for the protection of our future. Therefore it is with regret that if you and your directors do not choose to use recycled, non-chlorine-bleached paper, I feel I must withdraw my support of your publication.

Lisa Whittred
Hamilton, Qld

Thank you, Lisa, for your expression of concern for the environment, and for your suggestion. You will no doubt be relieved to learn that Wild has been printed on recycled, non-chlorine-bleached paper since last year. (In fact, Wild was one of the first magazines in Australia to be printed on such paper—before, for example, Simply Living.) This

is explained in the Editorials of issues 43 and 45. In addition, page 1 of issues 44 and 45 carry prominent announcements that Wild is printed on recycled paper, as does page 1 of this issue. Editor

Glad to know the magazine is printed on 75 per cent recycled paper, even though it looks unchanged from before.

K Moylan
Dickson, ACT

Our mate Warwick

The answer to your question, so delicately put in the Green Pages of *Wild* no 45 (page 31), is yes.

However, I have become such a *Wild* junkie that I now beg space to inform you of our Environmental Policy, which is winging its way to you courtesy of Australia Post.

I was going to call it a ground-breaking policy, except that I considered that ground-breaking is not exactly an environmentally friendly term. The policy is certainly the first of its type in Tasmania and, *inter alia*, announces in black and white that the so-called 'days of confrontation' are over.

It seems that the gap between canoeists and the Hydro, widened by the Franklin dispute, is now narrowing. It was the Hydro which provided the rapids in the Launceston Gorge for the World Canoe Slaloms by opening the gates on Lake Trevallyn, a fact also recorded in *Wild* no 45...

Of further interest to your readers in the wide, brown-coal land would be the fact that Tasmanians are the largest producers and users of renewable energy in Australia.

See, you're right, the 'evil empire' is not so bad at all!

Warwick Hadfield
Publicist
Hydro-Electric Commission of Tasmania
Sandy Bay, Tas

Pulling the wool...

We thank you for your magazine's honest assessment of the Wool Bag in Equipment, *Wild* no 45.

We would like to clarify one point. The Wool Bag is designed as a camping bag, certainly not as a backpacking/hiking bag. It is within this context that our recommendation on the label—'suitable for very cold conditions'—should be considered...

Ted Gray
General Manager
Puradown Australia Pty Ltd
Reservoir, Vic

Having been an avid reader of *Wild* since the first issue, I have always enjoyed the blend of environmental conservation and outdoor adventure.

The items that most of us carry with us in the outdoors, which assist our survival in somewhat harsh conditions, are often made

from materials which are non-renewable and have been manufactured from raw materials from some other part of the world. These raw materials have generally been obtained by exploiting the environment in some way and their processing to make the products we use can also be damaging to the environment. Transporting the materials to a distant location further has a detrimental effect...in the form of greenhouse gases.

Wild no 44 has a survey on 'Warm Tops', with the only renewable material listed being down, which required a non-renewable 'container', nylon.

There was not one woollen garment listed. On face value wool, being a renewable resource, should be far more environmentally friendly than a synthetic fleece. It's also produced in Australia (not to mention New Zealand) [Indeed! Editor] therefore little greenhouse-gas-producing freight is involved.

So how about evaluating the environmental effects of the products that are available as part of the assessment as to their suitability for the intended use...

Peter Ireland
Thames, New Zealand

Sore point

As one of the group that helped to clear the North-west Spur track and build foundations for the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club hut on Mt Feathertop, I was appalled to learn from *Wild* no 45 of the recommendations by the Victorian National Parks Association to demolish it. The reason given for this act is that the hut is an eyesore. As noted in the hut log-book, it is not the view of the hut from the Harrietville road that is the problem, it is the view of the road from the hut.

The hut should be preserved at all costs: It is an alpine refuge in the grand style of the European and New Zealand Alps—open to all, it is one of the very few places in Australia where it is possible to learn the craft of alpine mountaineering.

It is an historically significant building. It was one of the very first geodesic domes built in Australia, predating Buckminster Fuller's Montreal Pavilion.

It is a monument to members of the MUMC who have died in various parts of the world. It is ideally located—well away from the day trippers who put so much pressure on the dilapidated Federation Hut; it is easy to find in bad weather, and has played a vital role in many search-and-rescue operations.

David Gamble
North Balwyn, Vic

The rest is history

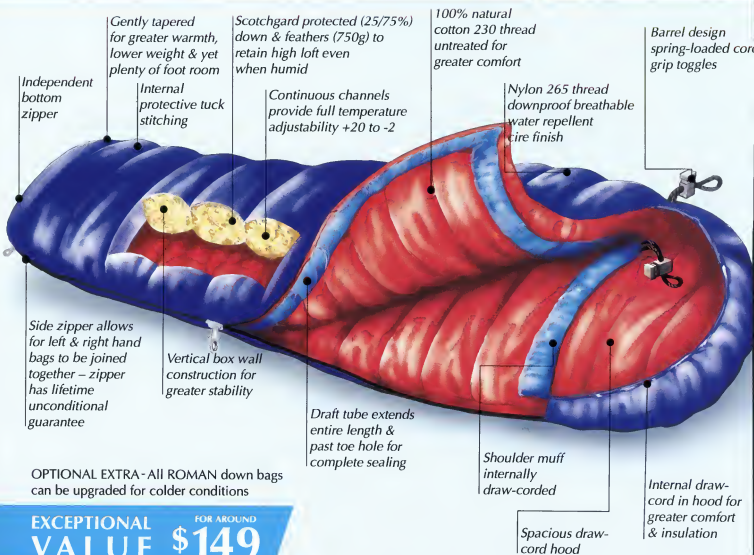
The excellent article 'The Passes of Narrow Neck' by David and Roger Collison in *Wild* no 44 was extremely interesting as I feel that Narrow Neck is overlooked these days by

ROMAN SLEEPING BAGS

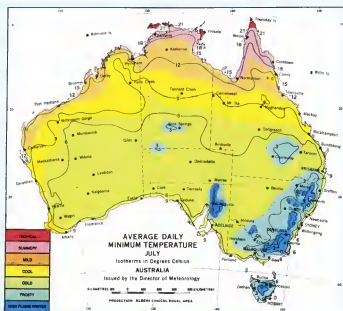


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bushwalkers and those who write about bushwalking; yet that spectacular peninsula is very much a part of the beginnings of recreational bushwalking in New South Wales.

My father, Alan Rigby (1901-66), first walked out along Narrow Neck in about 1919 or 1920 and two of his party of four were Walter ('Taro') Tarr and his brother Ben Tarr, friends who lived near him in Auburn. While not absolutely sure, I believe that this was the first time Taro visited his beloved Clear Hill.

A year or so after that trip, my father met the legendary Myles Dunphy at the Sydney Technical College and became a member (no 9) of the Mountain Trails Club and therefore one of that small group of men whom Myles liked to call his 'bush brothers'.

As boys in the 1940s and 1950s, we heard a lot of stories by those old walkers, and I have in my possession several very early maps by Myles, including a strip map of Narrow Neck, dated 1919.

On this map, no passes off Narrow Neck are marked and there is a notation to the east of what we know as Bushwalkers Hill, which refers to the headwaters of Little Cedar Creek as 'very rough and inaccessible country'.

The waterfall just after First Narrow Neck, later known as Diamond Falls, is not named on the map and several other features bear names different from those used later: Try Again Head for Carlons Head, Clear Head for Clear Hill, Oh Hell Point for Cedar Head, and Bushwalkers Hill is marked just 'highest point'. The Clear Hill Track itself, in later decades to become a veritable bushwalkers' 'highway' to and from Wild Dog Mountains and Cocks River, is marked on Myles' old map as 'fair' to Cedar Head Swamp and 'very faint' on to Clear Head. The deviation into Glen Raphael is marked as 'route only'.

The map shows that by 1919 Glen Raphael had been named (one assumes after Myles' old mate Raphael Doyle, a founding member of the MTC) and Breakfast Creek, Cedar Creek and First and Second Narrow Neck are there also. There is no mention of Corral Swamp or Red Ledge Cave. There was a section after First Narrow Neck which my father always called 'Arizona' and which both your article and the 1919 map call Stony Top. Remarkably, the map also shows 'proposed pass to Megalong Valley' at what is now the location of the water supply pipeline at the northern end of First Narrow Neck...

I think that the occasional historical articles in *Wild* are one of the magazine's best features. Thanks.

Roger Rigby
Wahroonga, NSW

Wet ones

Many thanks for continuing to produce a magazine of the highest standards. It is always good to see a publication which encourages 'both sides' in letters to the Editor and elsewhere.

What has prompted me to write is an idea proposed in Trix, *Wild* no 45 (page 87). That is, the suggestion to use your (breathable) waterproof jacket as a waterproof foot for your sleeping bag. Alas, all I got from trying it (several years ago) was a wet sleeping bag. On very cold nights the condensation froze on the

inside of the jacket (Gore-Tex from Paddy Pallin) and in slightly warmer temperatures it condensed and wet the bag. My wife and I have experimented with several different jackets (all Gore-Tex) and now simply put a waterproof layer between the bag and the fly...

The Lemming
aka Mark Carson
Higgins, ACT

Bagged

I'm writing in response to the letter from Christopher Skeates in *Wild* no 45.

While sleeping-bag ratings are subject to debate, it should be remembered that the ratings merely relate to the differences in bags from one manufacturer to another (something *Wild* stresses in its comparisons).

A certain amount of experience, some of it painful or uncomfortable, is necessary. Anybody who purchases new gear should keep in mind: 1) the more fashionable the garment, the less practical it will turn out to be; 2) the more expensive the article, the more you need experience (your own or that of someone else); 3) nearly all salespeople can give you advice but that advice is only one person's opinion.

It is up to individuals to learn how to use the equipment they purchase, and to know their own limitations.

Ted Malthouse
Mt Hagen, Papua New Guinea

The middle line

...I would like to compliment you on an excellent production. I read it from cover to cover in the first week that I got it.!

I have just been on a commercial sea kayak trip around Hinchinbrook Island with Raging Thunder and feel I must add to the debate raised by Tony Jones in Green Pages, *Wild* no 44 (page 27)...

I would be very wary of branding commercial operators as destroyers of wilderness... They benefit the environment directly and indirectly. Firstly, they look after their immediate zones of impact very well perhaps because they must continually use those sites. I saw absolutely no destruction of vegetation or tracks and no pollution of any of the beach campsites. Each site was found and left as if untouched. Secondly, these companies contribute to the education of their customers which can only benefit the whole community in an informed debate leading to an educated decision on the future use of fragile wilderness areas.

Finally, to address Mr Jones's concern about the intrusion on his wilderness feelings while on Hinchinbrook. This value is only part of a very broad range of feelings which can be found throughout the community. Ideally, management decisions concerning the utilization of Hinchinbrook Island should attempt to incorporate as broad a range of demands as possible. Single uses of such valuable resources is a waste that cannot be justified in an area of diminishing resources...

Angus Adair
Coffs Harbour, NSW

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address, for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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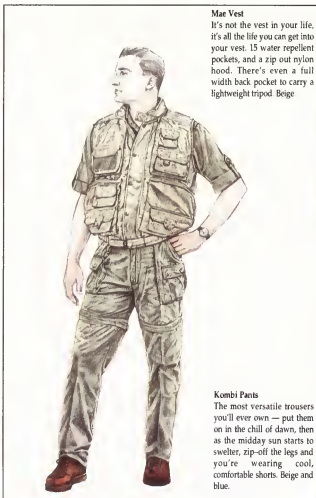
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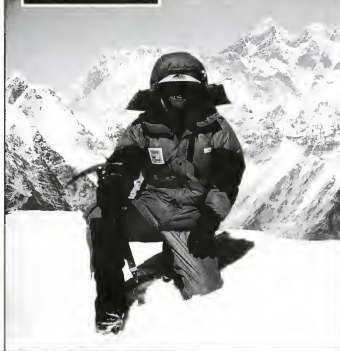
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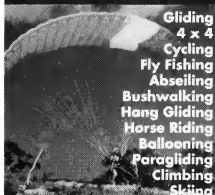
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